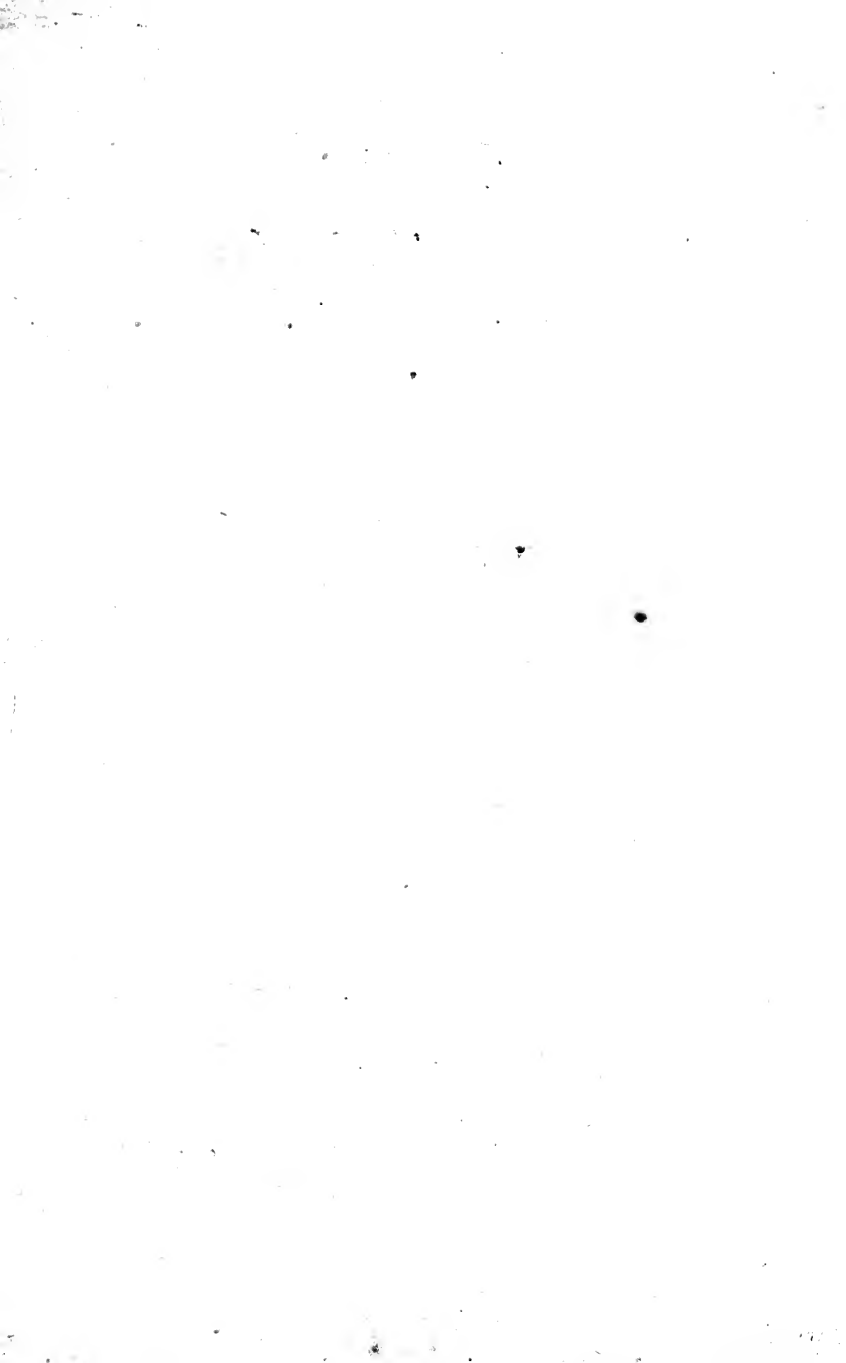


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THE INQUISITOR;

OR,

THE STRUGGLE IN FERRARA.



THE INQUISITOR

OR,

THE STRUGGLE IN FERRARA.

An Historical Romance.

BY

W. GILBERT,

AUTHOR OF "SHIRLEY HALL ASYLUM," "DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUESTS,"
"DE PROFUNDIS," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE INQUISITOR;

OR,

THE STRUGGLE IN FERRARA.

CHAPTER I.

THE INQUISITOR'S FIRST SUCCESS.

S soon as the Duke and the Dominican were alone, the former asked him if he had seen the Duchess.

“I had an interview with her Highness yesterday afternoon,” said Oriz, “but I cannot say I met with much success. However, I do not despair, but trust I shall yet be able to bring the illustrious lady back again into the fold. I have known those who have resisted the Holy Office quite as energetically as she has

done brought back again, and afterwards remain among the most exemplary and obedient of its children."

"I fear," said the Duke, "you will have more trouble than you anticipate. Unfortunately, heretical opinions have been engrafted upon the mind of my wife by men of such ability, and so deeply have they taken root, that there will be much difficulty in removing them."

"With assistance from your Highness," said Oriz, calmly, "or even with your passive permission and no active intervention on your part, I am fully persuaded I shall be able to effect the conversion of the Duchess, provided you will allow me to carry out to the letter the instructions I have received from his Majesty the King of France."

"I would willingly do much to meet the views of my illustrious relative," said the Duke, "but much as I grieve at the heretical opinions entertained by

her Highness, I cannot forget she is my wife."

"Still, might I suggest to your Highness," said Oriz, "that the letter of his Majesty is worthy the gravest consideration. He can be prompted only by the interest he takes in the welfare of the souls of his illustrious aunt and her amiable children. He naturally feels the danger the young Princesses are in by residing under the same roof with a mother afflicted with Protestant principles, and with a heretic companion, fearing that her children, following such examples, might have their minds also perverted from the pure doctrines of the true Church."

"Reverend Father," said Duke Ercole, somewhat impatiently, "let us clearly understand each other. It is my wish to show profound respect to your mission, but, ample as its scope may be, it has yet its limits. True, my daughters have re-

mained under the care of their mother, but it has been with the express understanding that their religion shall not be tampered with; and, to do her justice, the Duchess has kept as faithfully to her agreement as she did in the case of my eldest daughter, the Princess Anna, at present Duchess of Guise, than whom, I think you will admit, a more sincere Catholic is not to be found in the whole of Europe. And what greater danger will the Princesses Lucrezia and Eleanora run by the companionship of the young girl Teresa Rosetti than did the Princess Anna from the companionship and society of the talented Olympia Morata? I presume you allude to that young girl when you speak of the possibility of the religious principles of my daughters being contaminated, as, I am informed by the Father Pelletario, they have no other Protestant acquaintance."

"Without admitting that the companion-

ship of a heretic young girl is unattended with danger to the minds of the Princesses, I beg to inform your Highness that there is at this moment dwelling under the same roof with them, and receiving hospitality at the hands of the Duchess (although as yet, I admit, the Princesses have not made his acquaintance), one of the most dreaded enemies of our holy religion. I mean the ex-General of the Capuchins, Bernardino Ochino."

It would be difficult to describe the astonishment and rage of the Duke at these words. It was some time before he could collect his thoughts sufficiently to reply.

"Father," he said at last, "you must be mistaken. The miscreant could never have had the courage to present himself in Ferrara, nor dare the Duchess receive him. You must have been misled by your informants. No; it is impossible a thing of

the kind should have taken place without the Father Pelletario being aware of it."

"The reverend Father Pelletario was only aware of the fact yesterday evening, after his return with your Highness from Belriguardo, and Ochino has not been in the Palace more than two or three days. I should state that the Jesuit Father, immediately he knew of it, had resolved to inform your Highness, but on second thoughts considered it more the duty of the Holy Office to take up the matter, and requested me to give you the information. Although Ochino has been but three days in the Palace, he has had sufficient time to collect within its walls, to what he calls a prayer-meeting, many of the principal heretics in Ferrara, and after their mock service was over, many subjects were spoken of, especially by a young Swiss from Geneva, which showed but little respect to your Highness and the laws."

"Reverend Father," said Ercole, after

a moment's silence, "you completely overwhelm me. In your hands I now leave the management of the Duchess, under the perfect understanding that her personal safety shall be respected. Beyond that, do as you may think right."

"But pardon me, your Highness," said Oriz, determinately, "I must decline moving in the matter unless I am allowed the full authority proposed in my letter of instructions from his Majesty. Permit me again to read a portion of them."

The Duke having acquiesced, Oriz drew from his pocket his letter of instructions, and commenced reading—"If after such remonstrances and persuasions of *Notre Maître Oriz* to make her know the truth, and the difference there is between light and darkness, it shall appear that he is unable by gentle means to gain her and to reclaim her, he shall take counsel with

the said Lord Duke as to what can possibly be done in the way of rigour and severity to bring her to reason.' And again, it continues—'His Majesty wills and approves, and indeed prays and exhorts the said Duke, that he would cause the said lady to be put in a place secluded from society and conversation, where she may henceforth injure no one but herself, taking from her her own children.' By this your Highness must perceive that it is the opinion of his Majesty, the King of France, that measures of great severity should be taken with his illustrious aunt, to bring her to a better frame of mind, even though that can only be effected by the application of the torture."

"I do not like the use of that word," said Ercole. "Wicked and objectionable as the behaviour of her Highness has been, she is still my wife, and the mother of my children."

“I can easily imagine that the application of the torture must be repugnant to the feelings of your Highness, but bear in mind that the dearer the illustrious Duchess may be to you, the greater interest you should take in her soul; and the pain you may feel in allowing her to be submitted to the torture, will be repaid to you hereafter in an eternity of happiness. Nor is a case of the kind without precedent. Elevated as the position of her Highness undoubtedly is, others in equally high positions have been submitted by their relatives, and of the closest consanguinity, to discipline of the kind, and that to the great good of their souls.”*

The Duke remained silent for some moments, and then said—

“But am I to understand that his Majesty the King of France advises me to put the discipline to be applied to the Duchess

entirely into your hands without my right to interfere?"

"Pardon me," said Oriz; "I hardly said so. While his Majesty advises strong measures to be adopted as well as punishment, he directs me to consult with your Highness as to the mode of its application, in order to avoid greater notoriety than is requisite for the interests of the Church."

"I am pleased to hear you say so," said the Duke, "as now I think a perfect understanding may exist between us. I will leave the punishment of the whole of the heretic members of the court of her Highness without restriction in your hands, to do with them as in your wisdom may seem best. With the Duchess herself you have full permission to take any steps you may consider advisable, with any punishment short of the torture or death. Neither the rack nor any other personal chastisement shall be used in the case of her Highness,

and in this you must admit, on your own authority, I am fully acting up to the instructions you have received."

"Then am I to understand that I have your full authority to act in the matter as I may think fit, with the exception of the reservation you have made?"

"Fully and unreservedly," said the Duke. "And that it may not be imagined, even in the most indirect manner, that I attempt to control you or look with coldness on your efforts, in less than an hour I will leave Ferrara for my hunting-palace at Belriguardo, where I shall remain for some days."

Then advancing to the door, the Duke ordered the major-domo, who was in the hall, to send the Captain of the Guard, and a few moments afterwards that functionary made his appearance.

"I am about to leave Ferrara," he said to him, "for some days. During my absence you will obey all commands the

Reverend Dr. Oriz may give you, no matter on what subject, as implicitly and unhesitatingly as you would obey me personally. I give no further order, that there may be no mistake, and remember I shall hold you answerable that every assistance he may require from you is strictly afforded him under the penalty of my severe displeasure."


So saying, the Duke saluted the Dominican and the Captain of the Guard, and abruptly quitted the room.

NOTE. Page 9.—It must not be imagined that the atrocious arguments made use of by Oriz are in any way exaggerated. The instructions given to the Inquisitor by Henry II. are perfectly authentic, the phraseology of the text having been copied verbatim from the "*Memorials of Renée of France*," published in London in 1859. Many other authors, and among them Dr. John McNeil, Le Labourier, and Jules Bonnet, all agree to the correctness of the statement. Several Roman Catholics also unhesitatingly admit the authenticity, among whom may be especially named the learned modern historian

Luigi Cittadella, who quotes the fact in his "Notizie Relative à Ferrara." The celebrated Cesare Cantu, a rigid Catholic, in his "Gli' Eretici d'Italia," also admits it to be true. How little objection was made to discipline of the kind by the authorities of the Roman Church of the time, may be shown by the fact, that when the Dowager Queen Juana of Spain was imprisoned on account of her religious opinions by her son Charles V., her jailer Denia wrote to the King for permission to torture his illustrious prisoner in order to induce her to attend the mass, adding that its influence *was very powerful on persons of her Majesty's unfortunate way of thinking*. The reply of Charles to the request has been lost, though there is strong reason to believe he acquiesced in it. Certainly he allowed his mother to remain in the custody of Denia for more than fourteen years afterwards. For further particulars on this interesting subject, the reader is referred to the Calendar of State Papers lately published by order of the Master of the Rolls. Supplements to volumes i., ii.

CHAPTER II.

EVENTS FORESHADOWED.

ITTLE sleep was enjoyed by Renée or her two lady attendants on the night on which Bernardino Ochino left the Palace of San Francesco to ask for shelter and protection from the Judge Biagio Rosetti. Early the next morning the Duchess summoned Madonna Ponte and Teresa to a small cabinet adjoining her chamber. When they met anxiety and alarm were visible on the faces of the three. After the door of the cabinet had been closed, Renée asked Teresa if she had received any news from her father of the safe arrival of Ochino at his house.

"I have heard nothing whatever, your Highness," said Teresa.

"It is possible," said Renée, "that a messenger may have been sent, and you not hear of it. Had you not better make inquiry of the porter?"

"I will do so," said Teresa, "but I am sure it will be fruitless. No messenger would arrive at the principal entrance, and since daybreak I have myself been on the watch at the head of the staircase leading to the postern door, and no one has applied there."

A silence of some minutes now ensued, which was broken by the Duchess saying—

"I hope no accident has occurred to the worthy pastor. May Heaven protect him!"

Their morning meal was now brought to the room, but none of them had any appetite, and after it had remained on the table for some time, it was taken away untouched. The three now sat quietly to-

gether, glancing frequently at one another as if seeking for aid and encouragement which no one was able to give. The most self-possessed among them was undoubtedly the Duchess; still, even she seemed to be labouring under that peculiar sensation which occasionally comes over us all—that an undefined calamity, or terrible misfortune is about to occur to us, though no one can exactly tell where it may fall, or the hand that may strike the blow. More than an hour passed in silence, and though Madonna Ponte had seated herself at the embroidery frame—that occupation so much encouraged by the Princesses of the house of Este—after a few stitches, which seemed to have been made completely at hazard, she gave up the attempt, and pushing the frame from her, crossed her hands before her and remained as silent and unoccupied as the Duchess and Teresa. Renée was the first to break silence.

“My child,” she said to Teresa, “bring

hither my Bible. It ill befits us in our present state to remain helplessly absorbed in our own languor. Weak women as we may be, we have the power to apply to One who is stronger than all. Let us offer up a prayer to God for protection, as well as for our persecuted brethren in the city."

Then opening the Bible which had been placed before her on the table, Teresa having put a footstool for her to kneel upon, Renée read with a calm, clear voice, such portions of Scripture as she considered most applicable to their present position; and when she had concluded she offered up a short but touching prayer for comfort and support.

On the Duchess again resuming her chair, a singular change appeared to have taken place in her mind and in those of her two attendants. The expression of anxiety and alarm which had hitherto been plainly visible on their countenances now subsided,

and they began to converse reasonably on their present position.

“It is impossible we can disguise the fact from ourselves,” said Renée, “that some terrible misfortune is awaiting us. What it may be, none of us can tell, but one thing we have in our power, and that is, to bow with resignation to whatever God’s will may be. Still, earnestly do I long to know what has befallen the pastor Ochino—whether he has succeeded in quitting the city, or has found in it some secure place of shelter. Go, Teresa, my child, and make inquiries whether any one has arrived at the Palace with a message from your father.”

Teresa left the room as she was ordered, and shortly afterwards returned with the intelligence that no messenger had called.

Possibly of the three ladies Teresa felt most disappointed by the non-arrival of the messenger from her father’s house. Though hardly aware of the fact herself, she had

expected that Camille Gurdon would call; and although she probably would not have admitted that she bore any love for the handsome young Swiss, yet a proof of it might have been drawn from the manner that, now there was the impression of coming danger over her, her thoughts dwelt more on him than they had hitherto done. After her return to the Duchess she sat for some time in a gloomy mood. Fortunately the Duchess was too much occupied with her own thoughts to notice her, and after a short time the young girl entered again fully into the subject uppermost in the minds of the others.

Hour after hour passed, and still no messenger came from the Judge. A sort of irritable feeling now seemed gradually to come over Renée and her companions as they sat silent and motionless. Still no sound was heard, and the same silence which existed in the cabinet of the Duchess seemed to have been communicated to the

officials of her household, and they moved about the Palace on their several duties, solemn and speechless as spectres.

The bell was now heard ringing for mid-day mass, and shortly after footsteps approached the cabinet. Simultaneously the Duchess and her companions glanced anxiously towards the door of the room, as if expecting some communication. The door opened, but the person who entered was only the major-domo of the Palace (himself a Protestant), who came to inform her Highness that dinner—the principal meal of the day—was in readiness. Renée was on the point of giving a somewhat ungracious answer, when, glancing at the major-domo, she perceived on his countenance the same expression of depression mixed with resignation that she had noticed during the morning on the faces of her two lady attendants.

“Carlo,” she said kindly to him, “I shall not leave this room. Send up some

slight refreshment to us here, and that will be sufficient."

The man bowed and quitted the room, which he shortly afterwards re-entered, followed by two servants carrying some refreshments. These they placed upon the table, and then at the order of the Duchess retired from her presence. Seating themselves at the table, the ladies now made some slight attempt to eat, which they did, with their minds so completely absorbed in other matters, that when their repast was over, had they been questioned what viands had been set before them, they possibly would not have been able to say.

Two hours more passed without any messenger arriving from the Judge; and it was now time for the daily visit of the Princesses Lucrezia and Eleanora to their mother. Possibly with the idea of driving away the terrible depression which hung over her, the Duchess requested Teresa to go to the apartments of the Princesses, and inform

them she was ready to receive them. Teresa immediately went on her mission. On her way she passed one of the upper female servants employed about the persons of the Princesses.

She spoke kindly to her, but to her great surprise the woman, instead of answering with the unwilling civility she was in the habit of showing, merely drew herself up, and after casting a supercilious glance at Teresa, crossed herself with great devotion and passed on without uttering a word. Greatly puzzled as well as mortified at the servant's behaviour, and fearing that unconsciously she had given her some cause of offence, Teresa was on the point of going after her to ascertain the reason for such behaviour, when she thought it might appear undignified, and she continued her path forwards till she had reached the room in which she was accustomed to find the Princesses. It was, however, empty, much to her surprise. Thinking possibly she

might have arrived too early, she seated herself on a couch to await the entrance of some one of whom she might ask information. After remaining alone some minutes, the servant whom she had met in the corridor entered the room. Although Teresa rose from her seat and advanced towards her, the woman, with the same ill-tempered look, turned from her and was about to leave the apartment. Teresa, determined not to let her depart without receiving some information, asked whether the Princesses would soon be there. Finding she was obliged to reply, the woman told her that the Princesses had left the Palace with Madonna Bonifazio and Sister Laura about half an hour before.

“Do you expect it will be long before they return?” inquired Teresa.

“It is impossible for me to answer your question,” said the woman. “All I know is, that about an hour ago they received a message from his Highness, and that shortly

afterwards they left the Palace. But I cannot stop longer talking with you," she continued, "for on leaving the Palace Madonna Bonifazio gave us orders that the dresses of the Princesses were to be packed as soon as possible, and we are now engaged in obeying her commands."

"But tell me," said Teresa, now dreadfully alarmed, "if you know whether the Princesses are going to either the Belriguardo or Belfiore Palace?"

"Once more," said the woman, "I can give you no information, nor can I remain longer talking to you." So saying, she left the room.

Teresa, in great alarm, now returned to the Duchess. Noticing the expression of fear on her countenance, Renée asked her if she had received bad news respecting Ochino.

"Worse than that," said Teresa. "Oh! my dear mistress, how shall I tell you the news? His Highness has sent a mes-

senger for the Princesses, and they have left the Palace."

"You do not mean to say," said Renée, now starting from her chair in a state of intense terror, "that they are not to return?"

"I know nothing more, your Highness," said Teresa, the tears streaming down her face as she spoke, "than what I have told you, and that their dresses are being packed up to be sent after them."

Terrible indeed was the effect of Teresa's words upon Renée. When she had ceased speaking the Duchess gazed at her in a bewildered manner, as if unable to comprehend the girl's meaning; then sinking into her chair she remained for some moments almost in a state of unconsciousness. Tears at last came to her relief.

"It is impossible!" she exclaimed, again rising from her seat. "They must have deceived you. They can never have taken my children from me. They could not be so

cruel!" and then, suddenly changing the expression of her countenance to one of deep anger, she said, "From whom did you receive this tale, and why did you bring it to me when you must have known it to be false? It is impossible the Duke, my husband, could behave to me with so much cruelty."

"Pardon me, your Highness," said Teresa, "my informant was one of the principal servants attending on the Princesses. She told me she was then engaged, by the orders of Madonna Bonifazio, in packing up their dresses, as they were not to return to the Palace."


"You must have been deceived, child," said Renée, now more mildly, and apparently utterly unable to realize the truth. "They must have deceived you. I will go and question them myself."

"I fear you will hardly obtain much information from the woman," said Teresa, "though she appears to know all."

“I am still a Princess of France and Duchess of Ferrara,” said Renée, advancing to the door with great dignity in her manner, “and be obeyed I will. You, Ponte and Teresa, attend me,” she continued, and she left the room followed by the two ladies.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROCLAMATION.

N arriving at the apartments of the Princesses, Renée found them empty, and she ordered Teresa to summon the attendants. In a short time Teresa found the woman she had before spoken to and a man-servant, and she informed them the Duchess wished to speak to them. At first the woman demurred with considerable rudeness in her manner, but presently, thinking perhaps she might now have an opportunity of showing disrespect to a heretic Duchess, she consented, and, with the man, followed Teresa into the room.

To Renée's inquiry where were the

Princesses, the woman replied that she did not know, and even if she did she was not certain that she should be justified in answering the question without orders.

"Are you aware to whom you are speaking?" said Renée, with great dignity. "Answer me immediately, where are the Princesses?"

"And once more," said the woman, "I refuse to obey you without permission."

"Well," said Renée, "I shall ask you no further question, but I promise you shall be dismissed and punished severely for your impertinence."

"I'm perfectly ready," said the woman, with an air of humility in her countenance, "to suffer in the cause of our Holy Church."

The man-servant, however, who had hitherto been silent, probably thinking that he might have been included in Renée's threat, and calculating that although her

Highness was then in disfavour, the time might soon come when she would again resume her power, corroborated the scanty information given to Renée by the woman, assuming that neither he nor any of the servants knew more of the matter.

For some time Renée seemed to be in doubt, and questioned the man further, but at last came to the conclusion he was speaking the truth, and, without saying more, beckoned to her attendants, and then left the room to proceed to her own apartments. On entering, the courage which had hitherto sustained her completely vanished. Throwing herself on a couch, and burying her face in her hands, she burst into a violent flood of tears.

“May Heaven protect me, and grant me strength and resignation, for my sorrows are more than I can bear!” exclaimed the unhappy Duchess. “The world seems to have abandoned me. My own husband has

turned against me, and my children have forsaken me."

"But hope that Heaven will still assist your Highness, and be not cast down," said Madonna Ponte. "You have no reason to conclude that the Princesses will not again return to the Palace."

"I tell you there is no hope," said Renée, passionately. "Did you not hear the woman say that even now the whole of their clothes are being packed to be sent after them, and would that be the case if there was the slightest probability of their return? No, there is no hope. I shall never see them again."

"But surely, Madam," urged Madonna Ponte, "that cannot be. The laws would never allow them to be completely separated from you, even if they were not allowed to reside with you in the Palace. Why not apply to the law for protection?"

"And to whom can I apply?" said Renée, rising to an erect position on her couch.

“And who would plead my cause? Is there a man in the whole city in whom I could confide without the chance of being betrayed?”

“Pardon me, your Highness,” said Teresa, “I am sure my father may be trusted.”

“True, my good girl, I had forgotten him. Pardon me, for my sorrows make me almost distracted. But your father, faithful as he has been to me and our holy cause, has I fear, no power left—nay, more, will soon be among the number of the persecuted.”

“Still, of that your Highness is not yet certain,” said Teresa. “Why not send to him and request him to wait on you? He may be able to give you good advice.”

Renée for some moments remained silent, evidently turning over in her mind Teresa’s suggestion.

“Possibly, my child,” she at length said, “you may be right, and your worthy father

may still be able to advise me. But what messenger can I send to him who would not betray me ?”

“If your Highness will allow me, and Madonna Ponte will accompany me, I will take your message myself. If I find him, you may be certain he will return with me.”

“Go, my child, if you have courage, but return as quickly as you can, for I shall feel desolate indeed without you both, and shall count the minutes till you come back. Be careful that no one knows the object of your mission.”

Madonna Ponte and Teresa now left the Duchess and made preparations for their visit to the Judge. To prevent observation they folded their black silk *candales** over their heads in such a manner as to leave as little as possible of their features exposed to view; and stealthily creeping

* See Note, page 45.

down the stairs leading to the postern at the back of the Palace, they emerged into the street.

They pursued their way without inconvenience, till near the angle of the Via del Piopponi, in which the Judge Biagio Rosetti resided, when they were for some minutes obliged to take shelter under a doorway to allow a troop of horse to pass, arrayed in their gorgeous uniforms, one side red, the other white (the ducal colours), with hats adorned with white flowing plumes, and the Captain of the Guard at their head. They were followed by a carriage surmounted by silken hangings of the same colours, in which were seated two men who appeared to be ecclesiastics, but who, from the curtains being drawn, were hardly visible to the crowd that surrounded it.* As soon as the soldiers had passed, Teresa and her companion pursued their

* See Note, page 46.

way to the house of the Judge, which they reached without difficulty, but found closed. After waiting for some time, and using in vain every means to make themselves heard, Teresa concluded that her father must be at the Palace of Justice, and being unwilling to return to the Duchess without fully accomplishing their mission, she and Madonna Ponte resolved to repair to the Palace, hoping to find some one who would inform the Judge that they wished to speak with him. On arriving at the Palace of Justice they were again doomed to be disappointed. Not only was it closed, but they were informed that no causes had been heard that day.

They were now greatly embarrassed what further steps to take. Teresa, in her anxiety, would willingly have set aside all maiden consideration, and have proposed to her companion that they should repair to the lodging of Camille Gurdon, to inquire of him whether he had heard any intelligence

of her father and Ochino; but unfortunately she did not know his address.

Thoroughly dispirited, they now determined to return to the Duchess, but their attention was attracted by a crowd who advanced across the Piazza, accompanying a herald who was preceded by two mace-bearers, and followed by a body of soldiers of the municipal guard. On arriving at the Palace, the herald and trumpeter quitted their escort, and, entering the Palace, shortly after made their appearance on a small balcony, known as the Ringiero, opening on to the Piazza, and from which all *gride* or proclamations of importance were first promulgated.

The two mace-bearers having taken their place below, and the escort of the municipal guard having placed themselves around them to keep off the crowd, who, anticipating from the unusual amount of ceremony observed, that some proclamation of interest was about to be issued, had

congregated in great numbers. The interest felt by the crowd had, notwithstanding their anxieties, communicated itself to Teresa and Madonna Ponte, and drawing their *candales* closer over their faces, they stood under the arcades in a position where they would be but little seen, to hear the edict the herald was about to pronounce. After the trumpeter had given a flourish on his instrument so as to call the attention of the hearers, and the mace-bearers had ordered all to be silent, the herald proceeded to unroll a scroll of parchment he held in his hand. Then advancing to the extreme end of the balcony, he read the somewhat lengthy proclamation he had been intrusted with.

The edict stated that, inasmuch as his Highness the Duke being aware that heresy had taken deep root in his dominions, thereby causing the great anger of Heaven, and wishing that all his subjects should live in a pious and Christian manner

after the faith of the Holy Catholic Church, had determined to put the axe to the root of the evil, so that the schism should no longer exist in his dominions, nor the anger of Heaven be occasioned by any laxity of his government. The edict then went on to state that his Majesty the King of France had, in the great interest he bore to the subjects of the Duke and their spiritual welfare, sent to assist in the good work the Reverend Father Oriz, Chief Inquisitor of France, into whose hands for the future the supreme jurisdiction of all matters relating to heresy in the city and Duchy of Ferrara would be implicitly placed; and that his authority would, in all subjects appertaining to heresy, be the same as that of his Highness himself. The herald next proceeded to say that the Reverend Father Oriz having received information that divers persons attached to the court of her Highness the Duchess Renée were grievously infected with heresy,

as well as many of the leading persons in the city, he, by the authority in him placed, commanded all good Catholics and citizens to give information to the Holy Office, so that they whose names here follow may be arrested and given into the custody of the Holy Office, that their cases may be inquired into, and punishment inflicted on those who remained obstinate in their wickedness. And furthermore, that all good Catholics were permitted on their own authority to arrest, or, in case of resistance, to beat, maltreat, or even slay the hereinafter named heretics, without thereby incurring any punishment either from the Holy Office or the civil authorities.

Then followed the names of twenty-four individuals, male and female, directly or indirectly attached to the court of her Highness, as well as several persons of eminence in the city; and, to their intense terror, Teresa and Madonna Ponte recog-

nised their own names, as well as that of the Judge Biagio Rosetti.

For some moments the two women remained so completely horror-stricken as to be unable to move from the spot on which they were standing. Teresa was the first to collect her senses, and leading her companion away by the arm, and whispering to her to draw her *candale* still closer over her face, so that they might not be recognised, they entered a narrow street in a direction exactly opposite to that of the Palace of San Francesco. Finding herself clear of the crowd, Teresa was on the point of stopping to take into consideration what step they had better adopt, when she noticed a respectably dressed woman apparently watching her and Madonna Ponte. Fearing discovery, Teresa again drew her almost helpless companion onwards—helpless from the state of extreme terror she was in—and was walking rapidly forward, when she heard the footsteps of some

one swiftly following them. She again hastened her steps, but the person following soon overtook them, and Teresa, by a frightened side-glance, perceived that it was the woman she had before noticed. She now made room for her to pass, but the woman approaching closely to the side of the trembling girl, whispered in her ear, clearly and distinctly, in the Italian language—

“ ‘ Be strong and of good courage; fear not, neither be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee, He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.’ ”

Teresa regarded the woman with astonishment, not unmixed with anxiety. She felt that she was actuated by a friendly feeling; and she judged by her quoting the Scriptures in her native language that she was a Protestant, but fearing she might be a spy, she made no remark, and the woman continued—

“ ‘And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed.’ ”

Both Teresa and Madonna Ponte looked at the woman, and the latter now thought she recognised her as having been formerly a servant of the Duchess, but who had married and quitted the Palace several years before.

“Are you a Protestant?” she asked her.

“I was, and am still one in my heart,” replied the woman, “though I have bowed my head in the house of Rimmon. May God forgive me, and look with mercy on me, for I had great temptation. But tell me, did you not hear the proclamation in the Piazza?”

“But too well,” answered Teresa. “Can you help us back to the Palace?”

“It is impossible. If you attempt it, you will be immediately discovered and arrested.”

"Can you shelter us!" asked Ponte. "I will amply recompense you if you do."

"I dare not," said the woman. "A priest lodges in my house who would recognise you, and immediately denounce me for sheltering heretics. The only place I know of where you will be safe—and even that is uncertain—is at the house of a poor widow, who resides outside the walls, in the Borgo di Mizzano, near the river. She, I know, would shelter you, but she is blind and poor, and her accommodation is of the smallest."

"Lead us anywhere you please," said Ponte, "so that we may be safe for a time, and be able to collect our thoughts. I will pay both you and the poor woman well for your trouble."

"Follow me, then, at a distance, but do not lose sight of me," said the stranger. "If we are seen together it may arouse suspicion, and we might all get arrested if you are recognised."

So saying, she walked on quickly in front, Teresa and Madonna Ponte following at a short distance.

The woman pursued her road onward in a westerly direction till she had passed the city gates, and had come within a short distance of the river. Here she suddenly slackened her pace to allow the others to overtake her. When they came up to her, she said—

“In the small house before us resides the poor widow of whom I spake to you. But I must warn you the accommodation she can offer is of the poorest description.”

“No matter,” said Ponte, “how miserable it may be. And, as I told you before, if she gives us safe shelter, I shall remunerate her handsomely.”

“A little will well content her,” replied the woman. “A zechin would almost last her for a year. Now follow me as before at a distance, and when you see me enter the house remain where you are until I

leave it. Take no notice of me, but then enter yourselves, and you will find the poor widow ready to receive you."

The stranger then quitted them and walked on to the house, which she entered, and shortly afterwards left again. Then making a sign to Teresa that she could advance, she continued her road in a contrary direction, and the two fugitives without hesitation entered the house their guide had left.

NOTE. Page 33. — The *candale* was a favourite article of dress among the Ferrarese and Venetian women of all classes, and remained in fashion for more than two centuries. It was fastened in some manner to the waist, and then thrown over the head, covering, if the wearer wished, a portion or the whole of the features. It was as powerful a weapon in the hands of a coquette as a fan with the Spanish ladies. Boerio in his dictionary of the Venetian dialect speaks of it with great enthusiasm, as hiding blemishes in the ill-flavoured, and setting off the charms of the handsome to still greater advantage. *Il che dare il potere veramente magico di abbellire le brutte, e di*

far vie maggiormenti speccare le attrative delle belle.

NOTE. Page 34. — The *carretta* was a carriage more or less ornamented. It was built without springs, having posts at the corners connected at the top by rails, from which hung curtains, which could be drawn or left open at the pleasure of the occupants.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLIND SAMARITAN.

UNFAVOURABLE as was the description given of the abode Teresa and Madonna Ponte were about to seek shelter in, it hardly came up to the reality. It might more properly have been termed an isolated hovel half-way between the city walls and the ferry leading to the Boschetto, of which we shall speak more at length presently. The house was constructed of dried clay mixed with bricks, and roofed with reeds. It consisted of only one room, and a large sort of slip or closet separated from it in the rear. There was no window to the house, light being admitted into the room only by the door;

and a small opening in the wall behind afforded a certain amount of ventilation. The inside was not more attractive than the outside. A bed, or rather mattress of some coarse texture, and stuffed with dried rushes, a small dilapidated table, a common wooden stool, one or two earthen cooking utensils of the roughest description, two wooden platters with spoons of the same material, and a horn drinking-mug, with a coarse earthen charcoal-pan in the centre of the room, appeared to comprise the whole of the furniture.

On entering, Teresa and Madonna Ponte found the occupant of the house ready to receive them. Though aged and blind, her appearance was attractive and prepossessing in the extreme. She was tall, exceedingly pale, with delicate, finely-formed features, and an intelligent expression, notwithstanding her loss of sight. Her grey hair, which was turned back from her face, was collected in a white

cuffia (a head-dress half-cap, half-bag), and formed a strong contrast to her gown, which was of a dark colour, reaching straight from her throat to her feet, and without any girdle or other confinement at the waist. Leaning with her two hands on a staff which reached higher than her shoulder (for she suffered from lameness as well as from loss of sight), and holding her head erect almost to stiffness, in the manner so frequently observed in blind people, she said, with considerable dignity—

“Enter, ladies: you are welcome to whatever little shelter I can afford you; and fear not, for poor as my home is, you have yet a Protector who can make it a stronger defence than the castle itself. For is it not written, ‘The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble?’ I have,” she continued, “little to offer you beyond shelter, and fidelity in keeping your secret.”

“But, mother,” said Ponte, in despair, “can you not help us further? for otherwise we shall soon be discovered.”

“I will help you in every way in my power,” said the woman, “and all other persons suffering for righteousness’ sake. But from what you may see around, you may easily judge how little I have in my power.”

“Can you not find us a messenger in whom we could confide?” asked Teresa.

“Were my son Gerolamo here,” replied the woman, “he would willingly execute any commission for you, and I expect he will shortly return. But first let me hear what is your wish, for he is my only son, and I would not ask him to undertake anything that would bring him into danger.”

“All I wish to know,” said Teresa, “is whether my father, the Judge Biagio Rosetti, has returned home, and if so, to let him know where we are, and request him immediately to come to us. You

could surely have no objection to your son undertaking an errand of this kind, especially as we will remunerate him well for the trouble?"

"Willingly shall he assist you," replied the woman, with much animation in her tone, "and on him you can rely. Both of us, I can assure you, would run great risk in aiding a child of the Judge Rosetti, and in this respect you are fortunate in being able to get my son's assistance. In a case like yours every true Catholic would think he was doing God service in betraying you."

"Both you and your son are Protestants, then?" inquired Madonna Ponte.

"I am," said the woman, "and so is my son in heart, though not in name. He hides his real creed from the world, and admits himself a Papist, solely that he may have the power of supporting his mother."

"And have you the courage to admit,"

said Ponte, indignantly, "that you allowed your son to quit the faith that he might be the better able to support you?"

"I would far sooner have perished of starvation or in the dungeons of the Holy Office, than that he should have done so to support me," replied the woman, "if I had had a voice in the matter. You may judge by my age and infirmities that my position in life has not so many charms as to make me sacrifice the soul of my only son in order to linger on a few days longer. He did it without my knowledge."

"Then why did not you advise him to follow the example of St. Peter, who, after he had denied his Master, repented and acknowledged Him again?"

The woman remained silent for a moment, and then said pointedly to Madonna Ponte, "Are you a mother?"

"I have been the mother of four children," said Ponte, "but the Lord has taken them all, and I am childless."

“Then ask yourself the question,” said the woman, “were you in my place, with an only son, the last left to you of eight, and whom you loved a thousand times better than life itself, how would you act? Look around you and tell me if anything can render life less attractive than that you see. Poverty and misery are my constant bedfellows; sickness and death stare me in the face. Friends and relatives I have none save that one son. The love I bear him shuts out from me all the misfortunes I have suffered, and the sorrow I am suffering. How then can I advise him to brave the Inquisition and acknowledge himself what they term a relapsed heretic, leaving but a step between him and death by the hand of the executioner? Would you, if you were in my place, advise him to trust himself to the mercy of the Inquisitor? But no, I will not ask you to answer my question. The God of mercy

has looked with pity on worse faults than this of mine. You do not know the circumstances connected with our history, or you would not have judged so harshly. But you told me one of you was the daughter of the Judge Biagio Rosetti."

"I am his daughter," said Teresa. "Do you know him, then?"

"Yes, for a God-fearing man, an honest Judge, a friend of the poor, the widow, and the orphan. Do not think me wanting in respect if I ask you to approach me that I may know you better."

Teresa, without hesitation, advanced towards her. The blind woman then letting the staff on which she had leant fall in the hollow of her arm, first placed her left hand on Teresa's shoulder, as if to ascertain the position she was in, and then attempted to pass her right hand over her features. Finding her face covered in great part with the *candale* she wore, the woman said to her—

“Oblige me by uncovering your face, that I may better know your features, and how far you resemble your father.”

Teresa at once threw back the *candale* from her face, and the woman passed the index and second finger (those eyes of the blind) over the young girl's face, but so lightly that she would hardly have brushed the pollen from a flower, preserving the while an appearance of deep thought, as if endeavouring to conjure up some reminiscence of the past. Her examination being completed, the woman said to Teresa—

“You strongly resemble your father, my child.”

“Are you acquainted with him, then?”

“I have seen him often,” said the woman, evading the question, “and have good reason to remember his features. But I hear the footsteps of some one approaching,” she continued. “They are doubtless

my son's, and he will willingly go on the errand you require."

A few moments after the woman had spoken, the door opened. Perplexed as Ponte and Teresa were with the difficulties which surrounded them, they could not refrain from regarding the new comer with great curiosity, so singular was his appearance. He was about forty years of age, of middle height, with an open intelligent countenance. The dress he wore, however, was singular in the extreme. Over a leather *guippone*, somewhat resembling a doublet, he wore a coarse black garment, in shape like a herald's tabard. On this was painted, both back and front, a white cross, reaching from the throat to the black leather belt at his waist. On his head he wore a black hood, without any mark or device on it, which fell over his shoulders, and was fastened by a strap under his chin. His legs were encased in strong, dark-coloured, knitted trousers,

which fitted closely and covered his feet like a stocking. A coarse piece of untanned leather protected the sole of the foot, and was fastened to the instep and ankles with straps somewhat like those of sandals. In his right hand he carried a bell, and in his left a small banner made of coarse black cloth, on the centre of which was painted, in white, a death's head, and on each side of it the crest of the municipal arms of Ferrara. The man seemed greatly surprised at seeing two ladies in his mother's house, but by no means abashed. First placing the bell on the table, and then taking off his black hood, he kissed his mother, and, turning to the ladies, said—

“Pardon me, ladies, for appearing before you in this costume, but uninviting as it may appear, I had no little difficulty in obtaining the privilege to wear it. Mother,” he continued, turning to the old woman, and speaking in a tone of bitter sarcasm, “I have this day received the honour of

being appointed banner-carrier to the *Becamorte** of the parish of Mizzano, and have not only been instructed in my duties, but have received my uniform, which I now wear." Then, scarcely in an audible whisper, he added, "Fortunate for you, perhaps, that you cannot see it."

"What duties have you to perform, my son?"

"They are few and simple in the extreme," he replied. "I have only to walk before the mortuary-cart with my banner in one hand and ringing a bell with the other, to warn people to bring out their dead or sick."

"Is the plague, then, in Ferrara?" inquired Madonna Ponte.

"The doctors have reported, Eccellenza, that two cases have occurred already, and

* A name given in derision to persons employed by the municipality during the visitation of the plague.

the Government has ordered the Lazaretto on the Boschetto Island, on the opposite side of the river, to be prepared to receive the plague-stricken, should any other cases occur. For the future, mother, my residence will be there till all danger has subsided."

The old woman sighed when she heard the sad duties her son had to perform.

"There are strange changes in this world, my son," she said ; "but it is better to earn bread at any honest occupation, than remain involuntarily idle, and eat that of charity. But," she continued, "these ladies, who hold the Reformed faith as taught by the pious Professor John Calvin, having heard the proclamation to-day which denounced them and many others as heretics, have been brought here by one to whom we owe much, for us to give them shelter and assistance."

"And we do not ask you to assist us

gratuitously," said Madonna Ponte; "we will amply recompense you for any assistance you may render us."

"Any assistance I can give you is at your service, ladies," he replied, with a courtesy of manner strangely inconsistent with the humble office he held. "It must be understood, however, that I am not required to do anything contrary to the law. Not that in your case I should personally have much compunction in outstepping it a little, but there is another life depending on mine, which I am most unwilling to place in any danger."

"Grateful indeed am I to Heaven, my son, for the love you bear me," said the old woman, understanding his meaning; "but think not of me in this instance. These ladies," she continued, noticing the embarrassed silence maintained by Madonna Ponte and Teresa, in reply to her son's remark, "these ladies are attendants on the Duchess

Renée, and one of them is a daughter of the Judge Biagio Rosetti."

"I am under too much obligation to the Judge not to willingly assist his daughter in any way in my power," was the man's answer. "Once more, ladies, what can I do to serve you?"

"I wish you," said Teresa, "to go to my father's house on the Via del Piopponi, and inquire if he is within, and bring him back with you if possible. Should he be unable to come at once, ask him to follow you as quickly as he can. If you are not able to find him, ascertain, if possible, from any of the neighbours if they know the address of Camille Gurdon, a Swiss lawyer, and a great friend of my father. Should you obtain it, call on him and ask him to come to my assistance."

"I will, and with pleasure," said Gerolamo; and divesting himself of his livery—for he well knew that with it he would find it difficult to obtain an answer from

any one he might speak to—he left the hut.

In less than ten minutes he arrived at the corner of the Via del Pionpion. Being uncertain in which house the Judge lived, and seeing a crowd of people gathered round a gateway in a state of great excitement, he advanced to make inquiries. He was on the point of asking what was going on, when an old man beside him placed one hand on his shoulder, and the other on that of another bystander, and leaped upwards so that he might be able to see over the heads of the crowd.

“I can see nothing,” said the old man, as he took his hand from Gerolamo’s shoulder. “But no matter, they will bring him out presently.”

“Who is it you are looking for?”

“For the heretic Judge Biagio Rosetti. Don’t you know he was denounced as a pig of a Calvinist in the proclamation to-day?”

“Yes,” said Gerolamo, “I heard that. Is this his house, then?”

“Yes, it is, and I hope he is in it,” replied the old man, who was no other than Carlo Pedretti, introduced to the reader in the first chapter as the guide of Ochino on the evening he entered the city in the disguise of a Capuchin Friar. “I hope he is in the house,” the old man continued, “for it would give me immense satisfaction to see him carried off prisoner. But no matter if they don’t find him now, the Holy Office are at his heels, and he will be cunning indeed if he escape them.”

“He seems to be no favourite of yours,” said Gerolamo.

“Favourite of mine!” exclaimed the old man. “No, indeed! I hate him as much as the arch fiend hates holy water. Did not he order a relative of mine to be flogged and imprisoned because he took something from a Jew? No wonder,

indeed! A heretic himself, he naturally took the part of the Jew against the Christian. But he'll have his reward for it now. His day has come at last."

CHAPTER V.

GEROLAMO'S QUEST.



MOVEMENT now took place in the crowd to allow some persons leaving the house to pass through. Gerolamo and the old man retired to the other side of the street, and the latter stood on a stone by one of the houses to be better able to see what was going forward. Presently two of the municipal guard with an official of the Holy Office, clad in his white robe and large black cape, and carrying a number of books and papers, came from the house. Shortly afterwards the gates were closed, two of the soldiers remaining outside to prevent any one from entering.

"No luck," said the old man to an ill-looking acquaintance who then approached him, "no luck. The heretic has escaped, but his hour-glass has nearly run itself out. But whither away so fast, old friend?" he continued. "We have not met for many a long day."

"I cannot stay," said the other, "for I want to see what's going forward at the Palace of San Francesco. They say it is surrounded by the soldiers of the Duke's guard, and that the Duchess and all her heretic attendants are to be arrested and conveyed to the prisons of the Holy Office."

"The Duchess to be arrested?" said Pedretti. "That is indeed good news. Wait one minute, old friend," he continued, descending from the stone on which he had been standing, "wait a moment, and I will go with you."

"And I will go also," said Gerolamo. "This will be a sight worth seeing." And the three then started off together.

"If this is really true," said Pedretti, "it will indeed be a glorious day for the Church. If the Duchess and her followers are taken, it will be some compensation for the escape of the Judge."

"No matter, he will soon be taken," said the other, "and glad indeed shall I be when I hear it. I have never forgiven him for allowing that horrible witch Marta Curioni to escape. That proves what a heretic he is in his heart."

"I don't remember her case," said Gerolamo, wishing to appear on friendly terms with his companions.

"Not heard of it!" said the other. "Why a more infamous act of treason to our Church was never perpetrated."

Pedretti and the other man, passing a little chapel at the angle of the street, before which a lamp was burning, here crossed themselves devoutly.

"But you did not cross yourself," said the man, "when you passed the chapel of

the Holy Saint Sebastiano." [Here he crossed himself again.] "Are you a heretic?"

"I?" said Gerolamo. "No, indeed! I was listening anxiously for what you were about to say, and I did not see the chapel. *Mea culpa*. I will not fail to mention my fault when next I go to confession. But proceed with your tale."

"Well, then, my cousin Beppo had a sister who kept a wine-shop near the gate of the Castle Fedaldo. As she was a widow with a family of children, she could not pay the business as much attention as it required, and besides that, she sometimes had very difficult customers to deal with, whom none but a man could manage. Then again she had naturally a great disgust for the trade, and would have given it up, only she had nothing else to live by. Fortunately for her, however, her brother not only knew the trade well, but liked it. He was just the man for it, being a tall,

powerful fellow, about forty years of age, strong as a bull, and brave as a lion. He was a capital tempered fellow, too, and was as fond of a glass as any of his customers. In fact, it's very likely the quantity he drank made a great hole in the profits, but as the business had increased vastly since he had the management of it, the loss he occasioned was more than compensated for by the great increase of customers he drew to the house. Beppo, you should understand, did not live at the wine-shop, but, after business, used to go back to his own house about a quarter of a mile off, where he had a wife and two children; and, I must add, it very often took him pretty well an hour to reach it, in consequence, as he said, of a weakness he had in his legs. Well, near Beppo there lived an old woman that everybody said was a witch, because she was always grumbling and talking to herself. Now this old woman had taken a great dislike to Beppo

for being what she called a drunkard, and Beppo had taken as great a dislike to her for her impertinence.

“One morning—Beppo having returned home late the night before, and this time certainly intoxicated—the old woman saw him as he was going to the wine-shop, and muttering something to him which he could not hear, she raised the staff she leant upon and shook it in his face. Beppo, who was out of humour that morning, went up to her and said, ‘What are you shaking your crutch at me for, you old hag? If you don’t mind what you’re about, I will get all the boys in the Borgo and we’ll make a bonfire of you. You ought to have been burnt long ago for a witch as you are.’ The old woman now got into a great passion, and shook her staff at him, and told him she would be revenged on him, old woman as she was. She’d soon put a stop to his impertinence.

“Well, although Beppo snapped his

fingers at her threat, he felt an uneasy feeling come over him, which increased as he went on. In fact, so painful did it become, that when he had got to the wine-shop he was obliged to fill a horn mug with the strongest wine he could get, and drink it off to strengthen himself. Although it did him good at the time, the effects soon wore off, and he was obliged to take some more. Strange enough, he could not shake off the old woman's threat, though he was a bold man generally, and he felt she was working him some evil. Well, after drinking on for some time, he couldn't get rid of the feeling, and he called his sister, and told her he wanted her to look after the shop, as he didn't feel well, and was going home. She asked what was the matter with him, and he said he felt as if he was bewitched, and that the old woman who lived opposite to him had done it. Bidding some friends who were drinking 'good-bye,' he left the house, but before he had reached half the

distance home he fell senseless on the ground. Fortunately a man was passing at the time who knew him, and he and some others carried him to his house and placed him on his bed.

“And now a change came over him. From being quite silent and helpless, he struck out in a red flush all over, his face swelled, and the perspiration poured off it. Then he began to talk in a wild manner and start up in bed, and to beg his wife and others to protect him from the rats that were in his room running about, chasing each other sometimes down the side of the room, sometimes over the bed, and even across his face. Of course his wife and friends, after being very much puzzled to know what was the matter with him, now became dreadfully frightened. That the rats were in the room and galloping about, as he said, was certain, for he saw them, and there could be no doubt that he spoke the truth, for the

terror and alarm on his face proved it. At last somebody said he was evidently bewitched. They had heard the old woman, Marta Curioni, in the morning threaten to be revenged, and no doubt she had bewitched him.

"They now sent for a priest to exorcise the evil spirit. He came, and at first didn't do much good, but gradually Beppo got quieter, and at last died as easy as if he'd been going to sleep."

"Well," said Carlo Pedretti, "I've heard the thing mentioned before, but not the particulars. If ever there was a case of witchcraft, that was one."

"So every one thought, and the old woman was seized and brought up before the Judge Rosetti. The witnesses were called, who proved everything as I told you, but the Judge wouldn't believe the old woman guilty, and released her."

"Ah! that wouldn't have occurred in the present day," said Pedretti. "The

Holy Office is properly managed now. Father Oriz is at its head, and he's a very different man from Father Fabrizio. Witchcraft would no longer be left to the Judges to punish; the Holy Office will take that under its management."

They had now arrived at the street leading to the Palace of San Francesco, when their passage was stopped by some soldiers of the guard, who would not allow any persons to enter the street, giving short and uncivil answers to those who questioned them on the subject. Finding a crowd had collected at the entrance to the street, Gerolamo asked if it would be possible to reach the Palace by any other way. He received for answer that it would be impossible, every approach being blocked up by the military, and no one was allowed to pass. He now inquired why the thoroughfare was stopped, and was informed that the Holy Office had taken possession of the Palace, and that many

of its inmates had already been removed to prison. It was also reported that the Duchess Renée would be arrested. Whether this was true or no, they could not say. Certainly she had not yet left the Palace.

The words had hardly escaped the man's lips when a stir was observable in the crowd, and a *carretta* (the same spoken of in the last chapter) was seen approaching, surrounded by many horsemen, who drove the crowd as far away from the carriage as possible. Who were its occupants it was impossible to say, for the curtains were closely drawn. The carriage and escort now took to the road which led to the Castle, and the crowd attempted to follow, in hope of seeing who were its occupants. But in this they were disappointed, for the mounted soldiers now formed a line across the street, and prohibited any one from following, while other soldiers proceeded to drive away those few who had managed to pass the line.

Gerolamo, having now quitted his companions, made another attempt to reach the Palace of San Francesco. This time he was more successful, but he found it surrounded by soldiers, who, the moment any one stopped and cast a glance at the building, immediately ordered them to walk on. Gerolamo again attempted to enter into conversation with one of the soldiers, but he merely received a surly reply, implying that he had better mind his own business, and not ask impertinent questions, or it would be the worse for him.

Perceiving it would be useless to make any further attempt to gain information at the Palace, Gerolamo returned to the Via del Piopponi, intending to make another effort to enter the house of the Judge. When he arrived at it, however, he found the door closed, and two sullen-looking sentinels standing before it. He now made some inquiries of different

inhabitants of the street as to whether they could inform him where a Swiss lawyer of the name of Camille Gurdon resided. The answers, however, were of the most unsatisfactory description. No one knew him, or had ever heard of his name, and Gerolamo had now no other course to adopt than to return, after a fruitless errand, to his mother's house.

On entering the door both Teresa and Madonna Ponte rushed to receive him, and hear what intelligence he had brought. He narrated calmly the particulars of his unsatisfactory mission. He told them that though the Judge had fortunately escaped, yet his house had been ransacked by the officers of the Holy Inquisition, the doors closed, and sentinels placed over it. He had endeavoured to reach the Palace of San Francesco, but had been impeded by the soldiers. He had, however, learnt that all the attendants of her Highness had already been arrested and carried to prison,

and he had every reason to believe the Duchess was also removed from the Palace. He had certainly seen a carriage surrounded by soldiers, and evidently guarded with great caution, which was supposed to contain the Duchess, but the curtains were so completely closed it was impossible to see who was inside, nor could he tell its destination, as no one was allowed to follow it.

Teresa asked if he had inquired for Camille Gurdon. Gerolamo replied that he had, but was unable to obtain any information whatever respecting him. In fact, no one seemed to know him.

Teresa and Madonna Ponte now completely sank under the terrible intelligence they had received. It was, however, a great satisfaction to Teresa to hear her father had escaped, but Madonna Ponte fairly cried aloud, exclaiming, "We are lost, and have no one to help us!"

It was now the old blind woman's turn to

remonstrate with Madonna Ponte. She said to her, "Be not cast down, nor give up hope, for it is unwomanly. It would be much better for you to pray to the Lord for help. Remember his words spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.'"

Although the words of the poor woman might have had some effect in calming the sorrow of Teresa, they fell unheard on the ear of Madonna Ponte.

"You had better put off attempts at consolation, mother," said Gerolamo, "till the first burst of grief is over. You must now think for a moment on more commonplace subjects. What provision do you intend making for these ladies for the night?"

“What provision can I make?” said the old woman. “I have not a soldi to purchase necessities, and there is nothing but bread in the house.”


Teresa heard the woman’s remark. Placing her hand in her pocket, she drew from it her purse, and gave Gerolamo a gold ducat, requesting him to get whatever he thought necessary. Having received from his mother a list of things that would be required, he again left the house, and returned to it shortly afterwards, bringing with him the purchases he had made.

Arrangements were now completed for passing the night, which was rapidly advancing. Teresa and Madonna Ponte were to occupy the bed in the front room, and the old woman that in the slip behind it. All being in readiness, Gerolamo again put on his lugubrious uniform, and, taking up the bell and banner, kissed his mother, and, wishing the ladies good

night, quitted the house. Proceeding to the ferry, he crossed over to the quarters which had been assigned to the Beccamorte in the Lazaretto.

CHAPTER VI.

GIACOMO THE FERRYMAN.

LTHOUGH Ochino, when he quitted the Palace of San Francesco in the evening after his interview with Pelletario, contrived to arrive at the house of the Judge without difficulty, on more than one occasion he imagined he was watched by spies. Whether he had any good reason for the suspicion it would be impossible to say, for no one spoke to him or offered him the slightest interruption; still he thought he saw several who appeared to be watching him with great attention, and one even seemed to follow him pertinaciously for some distance. When Ochino had arrived at the corner of the Via del

Piopponi, in which Rosetti's house was situated, he stopped for a moment to consider whether it would not be prudent to take a more circuitous road before entering, so as to throw the person who was following, should he be a spy, off the scent. Before deciding, however, he cast a glance behind him, to ascertain whether the man had also halted, but no one was to be seen, and so suddenly had he disappeared, that the idea crossed Ochino's mind that he must have concealed himself in the doorway of a house, or behind some projection. So fully was he convinced that this was the case, that he retraced his steps for some distance, but without being able to find any one; not a soul could he see, and the streets appeared utterly deserted.

His mind now more at ease, Ochino returned toward the Via del Piopponi, and reached the house of the Judge fully convinced that no one was watching him. Having carefully felt his way up the dark

staircase as far as the first floor, he tapped softly at the door to avoid arousing the attention of any other inmates of the house. He forgot at the moment that Rosetti had informed him, that he was in the habit of sending his servants to their homes in the evening, so as to be able to receive the visit of a friend without anyone being aware of it. The Judge understood too well the machinations of the Inquisition not to know that the house of every Protestant of any standing in Ferrara had a spy especially appointed to watch it.

Ochino waited for some time, anxiously hoping to hear the footsteps of some one approaching to open the door, but no one came. He now knocked louder, but without better success. Again and again he knocked, and each time louder than before, but no answer came. He was now fairly puzzled what steps to take, whether to remain on the stairs all night or make another attempt to get the door opened,

when he heard the footsteps of some one moving inside the apartment. A moment afterwards the little wicket, which, in common with most Italian houses of the day, was incased in the principal door, was opened.

"Who is there?" inquired Rosetti, for it was he who had opened the wicket. From having left his lamp in the sitting-room, he could not distinguish Ochino's features.

"It is I, my brother — Bernardino Ochino. I have been obliged to leave the Palace, and am come to ask you for shelter and protection."

The Judge made no answer, but without hesitation opened the door, and, taking Ochino by the hand, drew him in, closing the entrance door softly after them. Leading him into the sitting-room, Rosetti, for the first time, spoke to him.

"Welcome, my brother, in any case," he said, "but it would have been greater

happiness for me to have received you in any other character than that of a fugitive. But tell me what untoward circumstance has occurred to oblige you to leave the Palace? I flattered myself that you were there, at least, in perfect safety."

"And I was of the same opinion yesterday, my friend," said Ochino; "but circumstances have since greatly altered for the worse. Not only has Oriz the Inquisitor had a somewhat stormy interview with her Highness, but I myself met the Jesuit Pelletario, who this morning returned from Belriguardo with the Duke."

"But did Pelletario recognise you?"

"He not only recognised me," replied Ochino, "but told me he would infallibly denounce me to the Duke to-morrow; that he would have done so this afternoon, but his Highness had quitted the Este Palace for that of Belriguardo or Belfiore—he did not know which—and would not return till to-morrow."

“The miserable traitor!” said the Judge. “You were formerly intimate with him, were you not?”

“True,” said Ochino, “but at the same time I cannot shake off the impression, that although Pelletario threatened to denounce me to-morrow, and I am persuaded will inflexibly keep his promise, his words in some obscure manner seemed to convey a hint or advice to me to quit Ferrara to-night, so that I might escape the clutches of the Inquisitors.”

“What did he say then?” inquired the Judge.

“Not one *word* could I quote that would imply the slightest idea of good feeling towards me, but there was a kind expression on his features and in the tone of his voice which seemed to imply that he wished to convey a friendlier intention than could have been extracted from his speech. And I should also state, that in saying the word *to-morrow*, he placed a peculiar

emphasis on it, as if he wished me to understand he would take no steps this evening. Altogether, I believe his feeling was not unfriendly, though he had ostensibly a duty to perform which he would go through with."

The Judge remained silent for a few moments, and then said:—

"My friend, there is no time to be lost. You must leave Ferrara immediately, and I will accompany you till you are out of danger."

"Pray do not think of risking your life," said Ochino. "Your safety is far too valuable to our brethren at this moment, to allow of your imperilling it by accompanying me. I shall trust myself implicitly in God's hand. If it be His will that I should escape, I have little to fear from the wiles of my enemies. If He has ordained, for some good and wise reason which we cannot fathom, that I should fall into their power, I will resign myself

submissively to His will. All I shall do is to take the just amount of labour and caution to escape which, since the fall of our first parents, has been imposed on all actions and works of man."

"The danger is not so great for me as you imagine, my friend," said Rosetti. "My intention is to accompany you till you are in a place of safety or under the guidance of some one I can trust ; for in these days the fewer who know our secret, the greater the probability of its being kept. For the next three days I shall not sit in Court, and by the fourth I have no doubt I shall have returned."

"But had you not better allow the young Swiss, Camille Gurdon, to be my companion?" asked Ochino.

"I should possibly have done so, but he is not in Ferrara to-night," said Rosetti. "Having charged himself with the duty of procuring the means for your escape, which he proposed should take place to-

morrow night, he went to find a boatman in whom he can trust who resides in the neighbourhood of Mal-Albergo. He will not return till to-morrow, when he will call on me early in the morning to inform me what arrangements he has made."

A silence of a few minutes now ensued, which was broken by Ochino asking the Judge what steps he proposed taking.

"I think," replied Rosetti, "the better plan would be to leave the city by the Porta San Giorgio. In the first place, many of our brethren reside in that locality, and among them several of the municipal guard. There will be one advantage in my accompanying you; for by my authority I can prevent any disagreeable questions being asked you by the guard should they meet you. The officers on duty at the gate have now received orders to allow no one, whether priest or layman, to leave the city without permission, or being accompanied by some one in authority be-

tween the Ave Maria and sunrise, and I shall be able to get the gates opened for you."

"When we have quitted the city, what do you next propose doing?" inquired Ochino.

"We must keep ourselves as much screened from observation as possible till the ferry-boat has crossed the river to bring the peasants who wish to attend market in the town. It is very possible that the man who owns the ferry, Giacomo Zomo, who is a strict member of our faith, will cross with it. If so, I propose returning with him, and sheltering you in his house till we can determine our plan of action. He is a staunch fellow, and we may trust him without danger. But now, my friend, let me advise you to resume your friar's disguise, unpleasant as it may be to you. You will find it in a chest in the room overhead. Wait one moment till I have lighted a lamp, for

you." Then placing the lamp, which he had lighted, in Ochino's hand, he continued, "While you are away, I will write two letters; one to Teresa, informing her that I may be absent for two or three days; the other to Camille Gurdon, enclosing my daughter's, and requesting him to convey it safely to her."

When it wanted about two hours of dawn, Biagio Rosetti and Ochino, disguised as a Capuchin friar, quitted the house in the Via del Piopponi, and bent their steps towards the Porta San Giorgio. Although the moon was now sinking, the night was sufficiently clear to allow them to be seen at some distance. They therefore kept as much as possible under the shadows of the houses, and trod lightly so as not to allow themselves to be heard. They proceeded without interruption till they reached the gate of San Giorgio, which, as they had expected, they found closed. The sentinel on duty now challenged them, asking who

they were and what they wanted. The Judge answered that he and his friend wished to leave the city, as they were about to undertake a journey, and wanted to start as early as possible.

“There are stricter orders than ever that no one shall be allowed to leave the city till daybreak,” said the sentinel, “and so you must remain for the present where you are, or go home again, whichever you like best.”

The Judge now advanced a few steps to ascertain if he knew the soldier; but finding that he did not, he inquired the name of the officer on guard. The soldier informed him, and the Judge, to his great satisfaction, not only found he was a Protestant, but one most zealous in the cause. Leaving Ochino standing by the gate, Rosetti entered the guard-house and requested to see the officer. For some time the men he found there refused to call him, as he had thrown himself on his bed to

take a little sleep, leaving orders that he was not to be disturbed without good cause. The Judge, however, was imperative. Although unknown even by sight to the men, and unwilling to make himself known to them, there was a certain impressive dignity about him as of one accustomed to be obeyed, and at last they offered no further objection. One of their number left the guard-room, and, entering an inner chamber, called the officer, who, with an expression of some anger in his tone, inquired why he had been disturbed. Before Rosetti had time to answer, the officer continued, "Pardon me, I did not recognise you. What can I do to serve you?"

"I and a friend of mine wish to leave the city. You would greatly oblige me by ordering the gates to be opened. I will be your authority," said Rosetti.

"With much pleasure," said the officer. "I am sorry to have kept you waiting, but our orders are not to allow any one to

enter or leave the city unless they are well known to us, and in a position of authority. Of course in your case there can be no difficulty." So saying he quitted the guard-room with the Judge to order the gates to be opened.

Rosetti now pointed out to the officer the false Capuchin as his companion, whispering in his ear at the time the old Latin proverb, signifying that the "frock did not make the monk." The gates were opened, and the Judge, after thanking the officer for his courtesy, left the city with Ochino.

Once outside the gates, they had to decide what their next step should be. One, however, only presented itself to them, and that was to wander about at some distance from the gates, that they might not be observed, till morning. Heavily indeed did the interval pass with them. They conversed but little, each being absorbed in his own thoughts. At

last, to their great satisfaction, they saw on the other side of the river, the first grey beams of morning spreading upwards in the heavens, and their spirits and energies seemed to increase with the light. The Judge now advanced to the river's edge, and kept his gaze fixed on the opposite side, endeavouring to distinguish the ferryman's house. By degrees it became visible, and scarcely had the sun risen above the horizon when he saw a man, whom he recognised as Giacomo the ferryman, advancing toward the river banks, and look towards the spot where they were standing. The Judge immediately made signs for Giacomo to cross, who, however, took no notice of him for some time. Presently a passenger made his appearance on the other side, and Giacomo without delay prepared his boat to ferry him over. Slowly indeed, in the eyes of the Judge and his companion, did the boat appear to advance towards them. At last, when it approached

the shore, the Judge went towards it, and as soon as the stranger had landed, he spoke a few words to the ferryman. Sudden indeed was the alteration in Giacomo's manner as soon as he perceived who had addressed him. With great alacrity he now leaped on shore, and respectfully offered his arm to assist Rosetti to enter the boat. He was about to push from the shore without noticing the Capuchin, when the Judge told him he was his friend, and that he wished him to accompany him. Giacomo looked somewhat surprised, but making no answer he pushed his boat back again so as to allow Ochino to enter it, and then again started for the opposite side of the river. As soon as the boat was sufficiently far from the shore for them not to be overheard, the Judge said to the ferryman—

“I dare say, my friend Giacomo, you are not a little surprised to see me in company with a monk. But my companion

now sitting beside me is not one of the order whose dress he wears. He has merely put it on to escape from the city, and indeed from the Duchy, to avoid the death he is threatened with for holding the religious principles we profess. I told him his life would be safe in your hands, and he believed me. It is now for you to prove I have spoken only the truth."

"You may be certain, Eccellenza," said Giacomo, the expression of discontent which his face had worn since Ochino entered the boat clearing up as he spoke, "that I would willingly serve any friend of yours, although I admit I was somewhat sorry to see you in company with one I believed to be a monk. Now I know he is one of our faith, and in danger, I have double satisfaction in assisting him. May I know who your friend is, or does he wish to remain unknown? In either case I am at his service."

"I cannot do more to prove the reliance

I have in your good faith," said Rosetti, "than candidly to inform you who he is, for should you ever betray him, your fortune in this world might be considered made. The dress he, as a Protestant, now wears is the same as formerly he wore as a Roman Catholic. He is no other than our pastor and leader Bernardino Ochino, of whom I know you have heard. A price is set on his head, and he is now leaving Ferrara to escape to Venice, where he expects to find some friends who will assist him in establishing a mission and refuge in Zurich for those of his countrymen in Italy who are obliged to quit their native land for conscience's sake."

As soon as Giacomo was aware who his illustrious passenger was, he first drew in his oars, and then rising from his seat, he took off his hood (which in common with other boatmen of the river he habitually wore) with his left hand, and taking Ochino's in his right, kissed it respectfully.

"I am but a rude man," he said to Ochino, as he resumed his seat, "and hardly know how to express myself in terms I would willingly use. I should like to tell you in a proper manner how great is my pleasure in being able to serve you, and how the certainty of death itself shall not make me desert you, but I am unable to do so in the language I should like to make use of. Now tell me candidly in what way can I serve you?" and then, reshipping his oars, he again commenced rowing across the stream.

"My friend has explained to you as nearly as possible all I wish," said Ochino. "It is to escape in the quickest manner across the Ferrarese frontiers, that is to say, if by it I am able to reach Venice, for there it is imperatively necessary I should remain for some days."

"That will not be at all difficult," said Giacomo, "and I shall be able to accomplish it, I am fully persuaded, without

danger. But we are now approaching the shore, and I see several peasants have already collected, and are waiting to cross the ferry so as to be able to attend the early market. As soon as we land I will conduct you to my house, where you may remain in safety till I have arranged how the ferry-boat work shall be done during the day, as I intend to accompany you myself, that is to say, if you agree to the suggestions I shall presently offer you. But let me give you one word of counsel. When you are in my house do not let my wife or any one else learn who you are, or on what errand you are bent, and pray do not let it be understood for a moment," he continued, addressing Ochino, "that you are other than you appear to be, whoever may address you or speak to you. My reasons for impressing this upon you I will explain afterwards. Now let us land."

The boat was by this time at the shore, and a crowd of peasants, at least four times

the number it would hold, collected round, all eager to enter as soon as the Judge and Ochino had landed. With some difficulty Giacomo got through them, making room for the Judge and Ochino to pass on to his house, and by way of drawing attention from the quality of his two passengers, he addressed somewhat angrily, and in boatman's phraseology, the peasants who were waiting to be rowed over.

"Are you all mad?" he said. "Or do you want to go to purgatory before your time, that a score of you are trying to enter a boat not big enough to hold half a dozen!"

The peasants immediately admitted it was a shame for so many to attempt to crowd a boat, which at most could not hold more than four or five with safety, not counting the luggage and goods they carried with them. But then, as each insisted that he was the first to arrive, and therefore in justice should be ferried over

first, the confusion and excitement, to Giacomo's satisfaction, continued without any interference on his part, till he had seen the Judge and his companion enter his house. Then, turning to his customers, he said—

“Hear me one moment, my friends. That boat will not cross the river any more this day. Here comes Pietro, my man—lazy fellow that he is, not to have been here an hour ago—and I shall have him and another, as well as my son, to work the larger boat, which has room enough to accommodate you all. Here Pietro, you lazy dog,” he continued, “come here and unmoor the large boat.” Then calling to his wife at the top of his voice (a buxom looking dame, who came out of the house the moment she heard her husband wanted her), “Come here, will you, and while Carlo” (speaking of his son) “helps Pietro to get the boat ready, I wish you would run to Batista's house, and tell him I've

got a day's work for him, and will pay him well if he does it to my satisfaction."

"Why should you have him?" said his wife. "Why not work yourself?"

"Because I've got something else to do, which I'll explain to you when I come back. Now, like a good wife, do as I tell you."

His wife ran off on her errand, and shortly afterwards, one of the passengers offering to assist Pietro and the boy in ferrying the larger boat over the river, Giacomo with great alacrity accepted his services, and in a few minutes the passengers had entered and the boat was pushed from the shore.

Giacomo being now at perfect liberty, returned to the house, where he found Rosetti and Ochino in one of the rooms.

"My wife I have sent on an errand," he said, "and my son with the man are both now employed in ferrying over a number

of passengers, so that all is clear for us to depart. I will get you to wait a few minutes while I collect some provisions to put in the boat, for it is better we should eat our morning meal there, so as to be able to depart before my wife comes back."

"But will you not leave word when she may expect you home again?" said the Judge.

"Better not," said Giacomo, sadly; "I might be asked whither I am going, and that I would not even whisper to any but you, for I know not whom to trust, and the very walls about here seem to have ears."

"As you please, my friend," said Rosetti. "We are quite ready to accompany you now. I suppose it is your intention to drop down the river, is it not?"

"It is," said Giacomo. "But where we shall land will be a subject for us to determine on after we have started. I would advise," he continued, sinking his

voice to a low whisper, "that we went no farther to-day than the village of Lagos-curo, where we will remain the night. I there have a brother who is one of the principal boat-owners on the river, and who is also a staunch Protestant. He is a man of good substance, and far cleverer than I am, and his ability to assist you both with means and advice is greater than mine. Besides, there are many others of our faith living there, and we shall be surrounded by friends who will advise us whether it would be better to go direct by land to Venice or drop down the river to Commacchio, and from thence go by sea."

Giacomo then left them, and a few moments afterwards returned with some *salame*, or dried pig's flesh—a favourite article of food with the lower orders of Ferrara—and a loaf of bread. They now left the house together, and made their way to the boat, in which they at once

took their seats. When they had started, and were dropping swiftly down the stream, Ochino asked Giacomo the reason of the great caution he showed before leaving home.

“Your question,” said Giacomo, “is a somewhat difficult and disagreeable one to answer. In the first place, it would be impossible for me to point out any particular cause I have for suspicion. I have injured no one, nor, to the best of my knowledge, have I given any one just cause for animosity. Again, all profess for me perfect goodwill; yet an uneasy feeling has lately come over me that some evil is impending—that some one is my secret enemy. True, all my neighbours continue openly to treat me with the greatest friendship, but even their kindness of manner appears to be forced, and as if they were concealing something from me, which weighs on my spirits, and makes me sometimes feel very miserable.”

“But is not that after all more a fancy than anything else?” said the Judge.

“Pray Heaven that it may be so,” said Giacomo. “At the same time it is a dreadful thing to imagine that those in whom we place the greatest reliance, and who, by every tie of friendship and affection, we ought most to depend on, are secretly working against us.”

“But you surely do not allude to the members of your own family?” said Ochino.

“Unfortunately I do,” replied Giacomo, with much sadness in his tone. “Until lately I never had a thought which my wife did not share, and now I cannot divest myself of the impression that she is secretly my enemy.”

“It must be your fancy,” said Rosetti.

“I would I could think so, but lately I have found both my wife and son secretly conferring with others, and those always strong Romanists. When I have

spoken to them on the subject, they have always found an excuse, evading my questions, or not answering them. Others of our faith have also confided to me that the same impression hangs over them, that there are secret enemies among those in whom they trusted, and all Protestants must now look with suspicion, not only on their neighbours, but on members of their own families. That there is some terrible misfortune hanging over the brethren of the Reformed faith, I am fully persuaded. But of that you, perhaps, are better able to form an opinion than I am."

"I would willingly say I differed from you," said Rosetti, "but unfortunately I fear the evil day is close at hand. May God take us into His protection, and grant us patience and courage to endure the persecutions which I fear will soon fall on us!"

The same style of conversation continued for some time longer, till they had nearly

reached Lagoscuro, when Giacomo, resting for a moment on his oars, told them that they must now determine in what manner they would land, so as to excite as little observation as possible. He suggested that they should enter with the boat a spot near the river-side, overgrown with tall rushes, in which they could conceal themselves for the moment without difficulty or danger of discovery.

“I will then leave you,” he continued, “for a short time, while I proceed to my brother’s house, and ascertain whether he is at home, which I devoutly hope may be the case, for if he is absent it may place us in some difficulty. If he is at home, I will return again and conduct you to his house. You need not doubt a hospitable reception, for I can assure you that in all Italy there is not a stronger friend to the Protestant cause than my brother Frederigo. Should he be absent, or on a journey, we will then deliberate whether to await his

return or drop farther down the river. There is no one else we can trust till we arrive at Commacchio, but there I know a good man, who could not only shelter us, but would take us in one of his own vessels (and he has three) to Venice. But of that we will talk more when I return."

Giacomo now pushed the boat into the rushes till he had reached the shore, when he leaped on it, and, leaving his two companions, started off to his brother's house.

The anxiety of mind under which Biagio Rosetti and Ochino were labouring had the effect of closing their eyes to the unpleasant position in which they had been left by Giacomo. A nearly noon-tide sun poured its full rays on their heads, while the rushes which surrounded them impeded a breath of air from reaching them, causing an almost stifling sensation of heat. Fortunately, however, they were detained but a short time. Before half an hour had

elapsed, Giacomo returned in company with a well-dressed man, who there was little difficulty in perceiving was his brother, although the new comer was evidently the senior by some ten years. Advancing towards the river's edge, he addressed the Judge and Ochino with much courtesy.


"My brother Giacomo," he said to Ochino, "informs me that you have been obliged to quit Ferrara to escape from the hands of the Inquisitors. All the assistance I can render you is freely at your service. My house is yours as long as it may please you to remain in it, and when you wish to leave, I will do all in my power to assist you in reaching Venice. I must, however, inform you that you will not be without danger till you have quitted us; for the storm which is bursting over Ferrara must reach us also here. But more of that presently. We must now contrive so that you may reach my house

in such manner as to attract as little attention as possible. Fortunately all my men have left me, it being the feast of some saint, and they have taken a half-holiday, so you will avoid any remark from them. If your Excellency will accompany me," he continued, addressing the Judge, "we will proceed by land, while your companion can go with Giacomo in the boat, and we shall in a few minutes meet again, for my house is close to the river's side. It would seem strange if I were seen talking with one in a friar's frock."

The Judge and Frederigo now stepped on shore, and proceeded together towards the house, which they managed to reach without meeting any one on the road. A few minutes afterwards they were joined by Ochino and Giacomo.

CHAPTER VII.

FREDERIGO THE BOAT-BUILDER.

HE village of Lagoscuro, though of recent origin, was of considerable importance. Fifty years before, the whole district was little better than one continued marsh. But in proportion as the locality became healthier by the draining of the marsh, the prosperity of the village increased. Houses began to spring up along the banks of the river in place of the miserable hovels which formerly stood there; and a new church of considerable pretensions was built, as well as a convent for Benedictine nuns, which was afterwards richly endowed.

At the time of our narrative Lagoscuro

was frequently visited by holiday-makers from Ferrara, attracted by the immense Venetian galleys taken in the celebrated sea-fight which had occurred lower down the river some thirty years before, during the wars of the league of Cambray, when Alfonso, the father of the present Duke, defended himself almost single-handed against the combined attack of the powers of Italy, and defeated them.

The house of Frederigo, Ochino's host, was situated at the entrance to the village. It was of considerable pretensions, and was evidently the dwelling of a very flourishing tradesman. It consisted of two buildings, the road leading from Ferrara running between them. Of these, the one nearest the river was used for boat-building, and was of considerable extent, for, as his brother had already stated, Frederigo possessed more than one boat, and all of considerable dimensions. In front of this part of the building, piles were driven into the river,

and all the boats not in immediate use were moored to them.

Shortly after they had entered the dwelling portion of the house, a fine, sedate-looking young man came in, whom Frederigo introduced as his son, the only surviving member of his family. His wife and two children had been at Ferrara during the last visitation of the plague, and both had succumbed to the pestilence. Frederigo had remained a widower, carefully watching that his son should be educated in the Protestant faith. He had now grown up, and was as ardent an adherent of the Reformed doctrines as his father.

After they had remained in conversation for a short time, Frederigo and his son, assisted by a staid-looking old woman who acted as servant, prepared the table for their mid-day meal, and that being in readiness, Frederigo allowed her to depart on some errand of her own, saying they

could do without her services for a time. Singularly enough, the old woman did not seem to be in any hurry to go, and when she did so, it was only in obedience to her master's order. Shortly after she had disappeared, Ochino questioned his host on the state of the Reformed religion in Lagoscuro, assuring him that he had heard there were at one time many adherents of the new faith in the village. Frederigo replied that this had been the case, but that for a considerable time back their numbers had been decreasing. Many of those who had brought up their children in the Reformed faith were grieved to find that they were being tampered with, and, yielding to their tempters, were joining the Romish Church. This Frederigo attributed to the insidious operations of the Inquisition in Ferrara, and to the fact that a party of monks, ten in number, had, a year or two before, taken up their residence in the village. At first they had

made no open attempts on the faith of the Protestants, but latterly they had been at no pains to conceal that their object was to bring back the inhabitants of the village to the old religion.

The return of Frederigo's servant from her errand put an end to the conversation; and their meal being over, she commenced removing the things from the table, eyeing the while Ochino, who still wore his friar's dress, with an expression of intense curiosity on her countenance, which by no means escaped the Judge.

They now quitted the dwelling-house, and crossing the road, proceeded to the empty workshop, where they seated themselves, so that they might enjoy the cool breeze, which at that moment arose from the river. The Judge then took the opportunity to ask Frederigo some particulars respecting the history of the woman who had waited at table.

"I know little of her," was the reply,

“beyond that her husband died a good Protestant. The woman herself also professes to be one, and frequently attends our family prayers. I have been myself more than once inclined to suspect her of being a spy, and thought of questioning her on the subject; but alas! were I to prove my suspicions to be correct, I should only be adding one sorrow more to the many I am at present suffering. No, I will say nothing to her. In our house there is little need for a spy. Both my son and I openly avow ourselves to be attached members of the Protestant creed, and as such, utterly adverse to all the pretensions of the Pope of Rome. This we admit without any hesitation, and, therefore, there would be little use in the Inquisitors setting a spy upon us to discover more. But what induced you to ask me the woman’s history?”

“From noticing the hesitation she showed to leave the room when our friend Ochino

was about asking a blessing on our meal, as well as from the curious looks she gave him when she returned from her errand."

"I did not observe it," said Frederigo. "But I am very glad you have mentioned it, as I shall now take care she sees as little of him as possible."

"Have you no pastor of the Reformed faith at present in Lagoscuro?" asked Ochino.

"No, none, nor has there been for the last two years," was Frederigo's reply.

"Do you think it would be possible to collect some of your scattered flock together, so that I might address them before my departure?" said Ochino.

"There would be little difficulty in collecting them, but the subject requires grave consideration," replied Frederigo. "A price is set on your head, and among those who hear you might be one who is aware of it, and treason comes easily enough to those who imagine they will receive the

blessing of Heaven by practising it. Again, you must determine how long you intend to remain among us. Do not think me inhospitable if I suggest it should be as short a time as possible. Once in Venetian territories, you will be comparatively safe, at any rate from the authorities of Ferrara, as the haughty Republic is too proud of the protection it throws over its citizens, as well as foreigners who fly to it for shelter, to allow them to be seized and taken from it without permission."

"I should propose," said Ochino, "leaving early to-morrow, and should wish to reach Venice by land if possible; but for that purpose I must find a trusty guide, and one well acquainted with the district."

"There will be little difficulty as to that. I am sure my son Paulo will undertake the duty willingly. And he is well adapted for it, not only from the love he bears you and the faith you preach, but from his perfect knowledge of the localities through

which you will have to pass. But as to your idea of a meeting of our brethren, we will collect a few—and but a very few—for you to address this evening, and that it will be prudent to do with great secrecy. We had better hold it in the place we are now in, and not meet till after nightfall, so as to avoid observation as much as possible.”

Ochino having expressed his approbation of the arrangement, Frederigo turned to his son and requested him to undertake the duty of inviting their neighbours to the meeting. Paulo with great willingness immediately left the boat-house to start on his father's errand, and the conversation between Frederigo and his guests was carried on with much interest, till suddenly the sound of many horses' feet, approaching by the road from Ferrara, caught their attention. As the sound came nearer, they thought they could distinguish with the tramp of the horses the clashing of arms,

such as is occasioned when a troop of cavalry are in rapid movement. Their curiosity now being fairly excited, they rose from their seats by the river's side and proceeded to the door of the boat-house, which opened on the road, placing themselves in such a position as to be able to see who were the fresh arrivals, Ochino remaining in the rear, so as to be observed as little as possible. Their curiosity was soon gratified, for a few moments only had elapsed before several soldiers of the Ducal Guard in full accoutrements passed at a smart trot. Behind them came a carretta with silken curtains, on which the white eagle, the crest of the House of Este, was embroidered in silver lace. This again was followed by another carretta, in which were seated two monks of the Dominican Order; and a body of soldiers brought up the rear.

The cavalcade had hardly passed when an expression of anxiety was to be seen on

the faces of the occupants of the boat-house. Short as had been the time while the first carretta was passing the door, and although the curtains were only partially drawn aside, Rosetti was able to see that it contained four ladies, and he felt assured that one of them was no other than Donna Bonifazio, the senior lady-in-waiting on the Princesses, while another seemed to be dressed in the garb of a nun, and he therefore concluded that the other two ladies were the young Princesses themselves.

The Judge having mentioned this suspicion to his friends, Frederigo left the boat-house, and standing in the road followed the escort with his eyes till at last they appeared to take the direction of the convent. He then returned to the boat-house, and told his companions what he had seen.

“I should much like to know the purport of their visit to the convent,” said the

Judge. "Surely they cannot have had the heart to separate the Princesses from their mother. If so, it will indeed be a cruel blow. But no, his Highness, whatever his faults may be, and however subordinate he may hitherto have shown himself to the Court of Rome, would not listen to any advice to take such steps against the Duchess."

"You forgot, my friend," said Ochino, "the arrival of the Inquisitor Oriz. That he threatened to deprive her of the society of her children I know, and there is now, I fear, too much reason to believe that he has persuaded his Highness to let him carry out his threat. But have we no means of ascertaining the fact?"

"I would willingly go myself," said Frederigo, "but my making inquiries concerning anything connected with the convent might give rise to the idea that I, in my turn, was playing the spy on the movements of my enemies, and that impression I should be loth to raise in their minds."

Then seeing the woman whom he employed as a servant standing at the doorway of the dwelling-house, he called to her, and asked if she knew who they were that had just passed the house.

“I do not know,” said the woman, glancing furtively at Ochino, who had advanced to within a short distance of where the others were standing, “but I suspect they are ladies of importance, from the guard being with them, and the reverend fathers accompanying them.”

“I wish,” said Frederigo, “you would ascertain, if possible, who they are, as I should much like to know, and then come back and tell me as soon as you can.”

The woman, greatly pleased with her mission, left the boat-house, and the friends again seated themselves by the river’s side, conversing on the dangers by which they were surrounded. This continued for more than an hour, when the woman returned to give an account of what she had heard.

This time Ochino's curiosity got the better of his prudence, and he advanced with the rest to hear the woman's report. She told them, with a look of evident triumph on her face, which she in vain attempted to conceal, that she had heard that an escort had arrived there with the Princesses Lucrezia and Eleanora, the two chief ladies-in-waiting, and two Dominican fathers; that the Princesses and ladies were to remain at the convent, and the Dominicans were to be lodged with the others who had been for some time resident in Lagoscuro, and the troops were to be billeted on the inhabitants till further orders. Here she stopped short, pressing her lips together as if she had some further intelligence to communicate, but was dubious of the effect it might produce. The Judge, well accustomed to the reticence of witnesses, easily perceived the woman was concealing something.

"Come," he said to her, good-humouredly,

“what you have told us is the truth, I am sure. At the same time it is not the whole truth, and you have heard more than that, I am certain.”

“If you have,” said Frederigo, angrily, to the woman, “tell us the whole of it at once. What is all this mystery about? I have no secrets myself, and do not wish my servants to have any either.”

“You are my padrone,” said the woman, with great readiness, “and have a right to know all if you wish it. Well then, I also heard that the Duke was angry with the Duchess, and had determined that the Princesses should be separated from her, and never be allowed to see her again—that is to say, unless she becomes a good Catholic.” Here she again stopped short.

“There is more you can tell us yet,” said the Judge, who had been watching her attentively.

“Well then,” she continued, this time

giving a glance of triumph at Ochino, evidently mistaking him for one of the order whose dress he wore, and expecting he would be pleased with the news she had to tell, "all the Protestants of her Highness's suite have been denounced as heretics, and are now in the hands of the Fathers of the Holy Inquisition, or at any rate soon will be, and orders have been given that all heresy shall be put down, so that the holy Church may be again triumphant through the whole land."

Terribly did these words tell on the mind of the Judge. He became deadly pale, and had evidently great difficulty to keep himself from falling. "Oh, my child!" he muttered, and then restraining himself, he asked the woman if she had heard who had been arrested.

She told him she had not, and all she knew was that several were in the hands of the Inquisitors, the others had for the mo-

ment escaped, but there was little doubt they would soon be captured.

Frederigo, who had been watching the woman sternly for some time, now said to her, "You must leave my house, Margherita, for I suspect you yourself are a Romanist."

The woman drew herself up, and glancing a look of defiance at her master, said to him, "You are right—I am a member of the holy Church. You heretics have had your day, and have had the best of everything in the land, but ours is coming at last. Now you know me, and for the future you may do the work of your own house, or get any heretic woman you please. I have given up the errors of Calvinism, and received absolution for my faults. And now take my advice, the best thing you can do to save yourselves from the hands of the Inquisitors is to follow my example, though why I should give you advice after the drudge you made me while

I was as good, or bad, a Protestant as yourself, I know not." So saying, she turned sharply round, and smiling graciously at Ochino, as if she believed he was silently approving her behaviour, she left the boat-house.

As soon as she had disappeared, the Judge seated himself on a bench and burst into tears. Ochino and the two others tried to console him, but in vain.

"My poor child!" he said, "what has become of her? What can I do to help her? Doubtless she is at this moment in the hands of the Inquisition; for how would it be possible for her to have escaped? God grant me fortitude to support my misfortunes, and give me counsel in what manner to avert them! I will at once return to Ferrara, and seek her, let what may be the consequence."

"My friend," said Ochino, "pray calm yourself, and reflect before you take any hasty step. In the first place, you have no

proof that the woman's statement is true. You know perfectly well how all popular reports are exaggerated by the last teller, and it is probable that this woman may have said a great deal more than she has heard. Let us wait a little while to hear whether there is any confirmation of her story. If so, do then as you may think fit."

"At the same time," said Giacomo, "I much doubt whether it will be prudent for you to leave here before nightfall, so that you may escape unobserved. It would be better, at any rate, to wait till night, so that we may catch the evening breeze as it comes up the river. I hope that we may reach Ferrara before daybreak, so that we may not be seen on our arrival. Besides," he continued, "we should gain nothing if we started immediately. We could not arrive in Ferrara till long after Ave Maria, when the gates are closed till dawn."

The Judge saw how reasonable was the advice given him, and he attempted, though


uselessly, to calm his anxiety. The time passed wearily enough with all till the sun had begun to sink in the horizon, when Paulo returned. A look of sadness was on the young fellow's countenance, which seemed to confirm, before he spoke, the intelligence already reported by the servant. He told them that he had heard all the attendants of her Highness had been arrested; but whether the Duchess herself was at liberty, he was unable to say. He also confirmed the report that the Princesses had arrived at the convent. With respect to the immediate object of his mission, he merely said that at nightfall some ten or a dozen members of their community would assemble in the boat-house to meet the reverend pastor, Ochino.

The Judge took no part in the conversation which ensued, being too much absorbed in his own sorrows, and the rest now discussed the best means to be adopted for Ochino's escape. It was evident not a

moment was to be lost; but as it was far more probable he would be detected in the daytime than at night, and as, on the whole, nothing would be lost by remaining a few hours longer, it was determined that they should wait with what patience they could summon up till after the meeting.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WITCH.

ITTLE sleep came to Madonna Ponte and Teresa the first night they passed in the house of the old blind woman. In their arrangements for the night, Madonna Ponte and Teresa occupied the bed in the room which formed the body of the house ; while the old woman improvised a bed, or, to speak more correctly, slept on the almost bare floor in the slip behind.

Although neither of the ladies slept, the reason for their wakefulness differed considerably. Madonna Ponte was full of alarm lest she should be discovered, and delivered over to the Inquisition, and

earnestly did she pray that Providence would save her from its clutches. Teresa, on the contrary, though naturally alarmed for her own safety, was far less selfish in her sorrow. Her own danger was to a considerable degree hidden from her by the anxiety she felt for three others—her dear father, her illustrious and kind patroness, the Duchess Renée, and Camille Gurdon. Of these, the safety of her father occupied the greater portion of her thoughts. Over and over again did she conjure up surmises as to his probable fate. That he was not in the house when the agents of the Inquisition visited it was certain, and this in itself was a source of great consolation to her. Then the idea occurred to her that he might afterwards have returned, and thus fallen into a trap which very probably had been laid for him, and then all the anxiety which had been somewhat smoothed away by the first reflection recurred in double force. She now began to

think that possibly Gerolamo, by way of not distressing her more than could be avoided, had deceived her in the account he had given, and that her father was already a prisoner. But, no, she argued, after a moment's consideration: there was too much honesty in his tone and manner to cause her any suspicion—he had evidently told the truth. She then began to conjure up reasons for her father's absence from home at the time of the visit of the Inquisitors. Had he been informed of the danger which awaited him? and if so, by whom? She next remembered the possibility that both her father and Ochino had escaped together; but, then, who could have warned them both of the danger they were in? Simultaneously with its formation, the question was answered in the poor girl's mind—the person to whom she was indebted for her father's safety, as well as Ochino's, was evidently Camille Gurdon. And grateful, indeed, did she feel to him for

it; for whatever might have been her doubts before, the nascent affection she bore for the young fellow, and which she was hardly yet aware of herself, induced her to believe, with implicit reliance, in the conclusion she had arrived at.

Teresa next thought of the fate of the Duchess. She had always looked upon her Highness as occupying so exalted a position as to be far above the reach of her enemies, whoever they might be. Still she had had experience from the visit of Oriz, that, elevated as her dignity might be, the Duchess was not altogether safe from annoyances, and she could easily perceive these annoyances would be greater in proportion as he gained ascendancy over the mind of the Duke. Her thoughts then again reverted to her father, and afterwards, to his friend and preserver Camille Gurdon, till she felt the certitude—though, as the reader is aware, without the slightest

reason to go upon—that they were at that moment in a place of safety.

Early the next morning the old blind woman entered the room, and commenced making preparations for their morning meal with an amount of dexterity which seemed perfectly wonderful, considering the unfortunate calamity under which she was labouring. Uncovering some *braise*, which had been put under some ashes in the little stove in the centre of the room, she placed on it a few pieces of charcoal from a box in the corner, kindling it with her breath till it was in a glow, and she then placed on it a rude earthen pipkin, containing some milk which had been purchased for them the evening before by Gerolamo. When the milk was thoroughly heated, she took the pipkin from the fire, and placing it and some bread on the little coarse table, invited her guests to their meal. It could hardly be said that either Teresa or Donna Ponte felt much appetite

for this repast ; their indifference, however, not arising from the homely nature of the food which had been set before them, but from the state of anxiety they were both in. Their hostess, judging from the short time they were at their meal that they had eaten but little, thought that possibly they did not like the food she had prepared for them, and endeavoured to make excuses for it, begging them to remember the poverty she was in.

“Make no excuses,” said Teresa; “on the contrary, we are most grateful to you for the shelter you have given us, but in our present state of anxiety it would be impossible to relish our meal, whatever you might have set before us. Now, tell me, when do you expect your son will arrive?”

“It is impossible for me to say,” she replied; “but of this you may be certain, that as soon as he can escape from his duties you will see him.”

The conversation then turned on the probable events which had taken place, and what means they had for obtaining information; but argue it as they would, they could arrive at no definite conclusion, nor could the poor old blind woman assist them in the matter. She would willingly have left the house and made inquiries for them herself, but her blindness made it difficult for her to go any distance.

“Other blind people, I am aware,” she continued, “have no difficulty in finding their way from one side of the city to the other, but I have not for more than three years ever reached the city gate. The last time I entered it I was received so barbarously that I resolved never again, while God should spare me, to make the attempt.”

“Treated you barbarously!” exclaimed Teresa. “What provocation could you possibly have given them?”

“None whatever, my child,” said the

poor woman; "but when bad passions are up, and prejudices arise in the minds of the ignorant, little provocation is required to raise up persecution." She then remained silent for a moment,—as if evidently wishing to say more, yet keenly feeling how painful was the avowal she was about to make,—and then continued—"But why should I attempt to conceal it from you? for surely you will not credit the absurd accusation. They said I was a witch. I attempted to pass them without notice, feeling my way with my staff, when some one snatched it from me. The crowd which had collected jeered at me, and told me to go on without it. But I could not find my way, for I had become greatly embarrassed. They said it was another proof that I was a witch, and that the staff had been given me by the enemy of mankind, and without it I was powerless. I implored of them to return it to me, when one of them proposed they

should try the test of water, and take me outside the gates and throw me into the river. Fortunately, at that moment a priest joined the crowd, who, seeing the treatment I was receiving, pushed boldly forward and told them they were cowards to attack a defenceless old woman in so shameful a manner, and, snatching my staff—the one I now carry—from the fellow who held it, he replaced it in my hand. Then, with a tone of authority, to which all seemed to bow, he told them to make way for me, and taking me by the arm, led me himself to the city gate, where he requested the soldiers not to allow the crowd to follow me. When we had passed the gate, he said to me, ‘Can you find your way now?’ I told him I could, and he said, ‘Then go in peace,’ and left me.”

“Did you not feel sorry at being obliged to receive assistance from a priest?” said Madonna Ponte.

“I did not,” said the woman, “nor do I now. We are taught to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us. What, then, should be our feeling toward those, even of a different faith, who treat us with kindness and love?”

“Do you think the priest knew you?” asked Teresa.

“I have often had that impression,” said the woman, “and the manner he quitted me has made the impression still stronger. I was not always in the state of poverty and misery you at present find me in, and formerly I had many acquaintances in Ferrara.”

Teresa and Madonna Ponte regarded each other for some time with a look of curiosity as if they would willingly know something more of their hostess. There was a certain plaintiveness in her tone, a correctness in her language, and a dignity

in her manner which seemed to prove the truth of her statement that she had formerly been in a far better position in life. The old woman, with that singular intelligence so often found in those labouring under her infirmity, readily guessed their thoughts. She now entered into conversation with them on the subject of her former life, and the circumstances which had occurred to reduce her and her son to the deplorable condition they were then in. She was, she told them, the wife of a physician, formerly of considerable eminence in the city, a Dr. Francesco Cortaldo. Her husband, disgusted with the abuses which had been noticed among the clergy of the Church of Rome, was among the first to turn an ear to those who preached the Reformed doctrines, and, instigated probably at the time by the love she bore her young husband, rather than from being able to reason correctly on the subject, she also adopted the Pro-

testant faith, in which their numerous family of children were educated.

Time passed on, and their family grew up, Gerolamo being the eldest of the children. Then followed three other sons, two of whom had perished on the battle-field, and the third had a few years before our narrative been obliged to escape from Ferrara in consequence of his religious opinions, and had not since been heard of. The next child was a girl, and after her three other children, who had all died in infancy. The girl—the idol of her father—was of uncommon beauty and considerable intelligence. Naturally froward and vain, these two leading faults in her character were still further developed by the incessant compliments poured into her ear on her great beauty. Both father and mother saw the necessity of keeping a careful watch over their child; and they had not only to do this, but also to watch the machinations of a certain Count Dedia,

who had become deeply enamoured of her, and whose affection she fully returned. Although the young Count was possessed of considerable wealth, ample, in fact, to maintain a wife in his own position in society, he was not able by the laws of Ferrara to marry Angela, as he could not obtain his father's consent. Under these circumstances the physician determined that all correspondence should cease between his daughter and the Count. Unfortunately his precaution was useless. The wretched girl, finding marriage was impossible, quitted her father's house, and took up her residence at Count Dedia's. This was a terrible blow to the physician and his wife, and they mourned for their daughter as for one lost to them for ever. The father became so depressed in spirits that he resolved to relinquish his profession, and having saved as much money as would suffice to maintain himself and his wife for the remainder of their lives in comfort, if

not in luxury, they removed to the suburbs, so as to be beyond the reach of any reports of their daughter's conduct.

Three years passed in this way, during which the daughter continued to reside with her lover, while her brother Gerolamo had been drafted as a soldier. At length the physician's health gave way, and he began to sink rapidly. He humbly prepared himself for the great change, having but one cause of sorrow—the conduct of his only daughter. One evening, after a succession of fainting fits, he perceived that he had but a few hours to live. Struggling with himself as if he hardly liked to make the avowal, he called his wife to his bedside, and implored her to send at once for Angela, that he might see her again before he died. A messenger was despatched, who found her surrounded by some of the gayest people in Ferrara. She heard with surprise and alarm of her father's dangerous condition. Great and

many as had been her faults, they had not succeeded in destroying the love she possessed for her parents. Without mentioning the errand on which she was bound, she called a man-servant to attend her, and then accompanied the messenger to her father's house.

The physician had sufficient consciousness to recognise his child, and although unable to speak, the tears poured down his face, and plainly told the emotion under which he was labouring. Struck with grief at her father's condition, Angela threw herself on her knees beside the bed. Taking his hand in hers, she earnestly implored his forgiveness for her wicked conduct, and promised it should cease. The dying man, unable to answer her, merely pointed his finger to Heaven, and then giving his daughter and wife one last look of love, he appeared to fall into a sleep from which he never awoke.

Angela remained in the house beside the

dead body of her father, and when she returned from the funeral, which took place the next day, her violent bursts of sorrow suddenly ceased, and with great calmness and decision she told her mother, that from that moment she intended to give up her evil life. Her mother was only too happy to have her child again restored to her, and the next two days passed over without anything material occurring, except Angela having again embraced the Reformed faith.

On the third day the Count Dedia, who had been absent at his country seat at the time Angela had left the house, returned, and to his great astonishment found she had quitted him. He received from the servant who had accompanied her the address of her father, and he immediately went to the house to find her. He was received by her mother, who told him the change which had come over her daughter, and of her determination to quit the wicked

course of life she had been leading, and that she had again embraced the Reformed faith. The Count was greatly astonished at what he heard, and declared he would not leave the house till he had seen Angela. This the widow refused to allow, while the Count insisted on it, till at last the altercation was put a stop to by the entrance of Angela herself. She implored the Count never to attempt to see her again, while he with tears begged her to return to him. Angela remained inflexible, and the Count rushed from the house threatening the widow with his vengeance.

When the news of Angela having quitted his son reached the old Count, it occasioned him no little satisfaction; but when he found that the young man still retained his attachment to the girl, he came to the conclusion that such behaviour was unnatural, and that he must be under the influence of witchcraft. He applied to the head of the Franciscans for assistance and

advice, and the monk received him with great sympathy, and listened to his tale with much interest. Without the slightest hesitation he decided that there was witchcraft in the matter, and that it was a fit and proper subject to be brought under the notice of the law. The same evening both Angela and her mother were arrested, and placed in the dungeons of the Palazzo della Ragione. The next day the poor girl was put to the torture to extort from her that she was a Protestant, and had used witchcraft to obtain the power she possessed over the young Count. The first she acknowledged triumphantly, the latter she indignantly denied. Her mother afterwards was put to the torture to induce her to confess that, in conjunction with her daughter, she had been guilty of witchcraft. From some expressions which escaped the poor woman under the torture she was suffering, the suspicion of witchcraft became stronger, and she was a second time

subjected to it. She then withdrew the expression she had made use of the first time.

The Superior of the Franciscans now thinking there was sufficient proof against them of witchcraft, they were tried for that crime as well as for heresy. Biagio Rosetti, then a barrister, defended both mother and daughter, and with great ability. But the Judge decided against them, and the mother was sentenced to have her goods confiscated to the State, and the daughter was sentenced to death.

The confiscation of her goods of course left the poor widow destitute; and it was then that Gerolamo returned from the army to Ferrara to assist in supporting his mother, which he contrived to do with considerable difficulty. After the establishment of the regular Inquisition under the management of the Dominicans, he was arrested on a charge of heresy. Somewhat

lax in his religious principles perhaps, from the wild, soldier-like life he had led with the army, and having an intense love for his mother, who was now blind, and had never recovered from the lameness occasioned by the torture to which she was subjected, and who he perceived would die of starvation without his assistance, he, without hesitation, consented to become a member of the Catholic religion, and was immediately afterwards liberated. He then took the hovel in which his mother now lived, and had since contrived to maintain her by whatever little employment he could obtain.

To return to Teresa and Madonna Ponte. During the day nothing occurred worthy of notice, and they remained in a state of great anxiety. Towards evening Gerolamo made his appearance in his official costume. To Madonna Ponte's inquiries why he had not called sooner, he said that three cases of the plague had been discovered in Ferrara

that day, and he had been too much occupied with his melancholy duties to allow him a moment's leisure. To Teresa's question as to whether he had heard anything of her father, he replied that he had not, the house was still closed, and he could obtain no information of him whatever. The only subject of interest he had to communicate was that he had heard to a certainty that her Highness the Duchess Renée was confined a strict prisoner in the dungeons of the Castle, and that no one was allowed to approach her but her gaolers; that her children had been separated from her, and that in all probability she would be tried and punished as a heretic. He added that inquiries were being made for those included in the proclamation who had escaped, and severe punishments were threatened on those who concealed them.

At the receipt of this intelligence Madonna Ponte cast a terrified glance on Teresa, who was too much absorbed in

her anxiety respecting the fate of her father to notice it. Not so, however, Gerolamo. He entreated Madonna Ponte not to be alarmed, as come what might he would keep their secret.

“Quite right, my son,” said the old woman, “quite right. Whatever we may hitherto have had to blame ourselves with, we have not yet had innocent blood on our hands, and this I say apart from the gratitude I owe the Judge, which will never be extinguished as long as I retain my senses.”


“And now, ladies,” said Gerolamo, “let me know of what use I can be to you this evening, for I can remain with you but a few minutes longer. To-morrow I will call on you as early as I possibly can, although I fear that will not be till evening, for, from all I can understand, there are many suspected cases of plague in the city, and we shall have a busy day’s work of it.”

The widow, finding they had sufficient

necessaries in the house to last them for another day, told her son they should require nothing further that evening, and Gerolamo, after advising the ladies not to quit the house nor be seen by any one, bade them good night, and going to the river-side, was ferried over to his quarters in the Lazaretto.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLAGUE.

NOTHER night and the greater part of the following day now passed over the heads of Madonna Ponte and Teresa. Although both acutely felt the painful position in which they were placed, its effects on their minds were of a totally different character. Madonna Ponte, utterly depressed by her misfortune, seemed to have sunk into a sort of terrified lethargy, occasionally waking up to listen to the conversation which from time to time passed between her companion and the blind widow, and then again relapsing into her former state. Teresa, although, as before stated, suffering

terribly from distress and anxiety respecting her father, which was still her principal sorrow, was far more self-possessed than her companion. As time wore on, however, her anxiety seemed somewhat to diminish, probably calculating that as she had received no news from him the chances of his escape were the greater ; and as hour after hour passed without intelligence of him, the plausibility of her reasoning increased. Indeed, she now began to draw out in her own imagination the probable means by which her father and Ochino had effected their escape. She felt persuaded that when Ochino quitted the Palace, and arrived at the house of the Judge, and related to him the occurrences of the day, they had taken immediate steps for their departure. She remembered it had been arranged that Camille Gurdon should engage a boatman to convey Ochino down the river to Commacchio, where he would

be able to find means to reach Venice. She further accounted for her father's absence from his house when the agents of the Inquisition visited it, by the fact that he and Ochino were both concealed in the lodgings of Camille Gurdon. The more the poor girl thought over the subject, the more natural did it appear, and the greater became her love—for it was now nothing less—for the young Swiss.

In proportion as Teresa's fears for her father diminished, her anxiety concerning the Duchess increased. And here, it is but fair to Madonna Ponte to state that she appeared, when Teresa could attract her attention, to sympathize with her companion in her anxiety, her love for the Duchess being great, although at the moment it was almost entirely absorbed in her care for her own safety. Although Teresa felt greatly grieved for the indignity which had been offered to the Duchess, she never for one moment ima-

gined her life to be in danger. She seemed to think it would be utterly impossible for human wickedness to proceed to extremity with a person in so elevated a position as Renée, and from time to time she entered into conversation with the blind widow, and explained her views respecting the Duchess, in all of which she fully agreed.

As evening approached they began to feel exceedingly anxious at the non-appearance of Gerolamo, and questioned their hostess as to the probable cause. The widow replied, that doubtless there had been more cases of the plague that day, and in consequence Gerolamo had been more occupied.

This reason, given considerably at hazard, was a correct one. The well-defined cases of the pestilence which had appeared the day before had aroused the energies of the municipality, and they had that day been occupied in completing

the regulations, not only to relieve the plague-stricken, but to prevent the spread of the malady.

It was not before evening had drawn in that Gerolamo made his appearance. He seemed languid and tired, and after depositing his banner and bell in a corner, he seated himself on a stool, and, leaning his head on his hand, remained for some moments silent, and apparently utterly exhausted.

“We have been long and anxiously expecting you, my son,” said his mother; “what has happened to detain you?”

“Nothing, mother, to me personally. I am merely tired and out of humour, as well as disgusted with my occupation. I have, however, no alternative, and having accepted it must go through it.”

“Is the danger of the pestilence diminishing?” inquired Teresa.

“On the contrary, it is on the increase. The reason we did not leave the Laza-

retto before noon arose from the fact that the Signore della Sanita held their meeting there this morning, and discussed, among other things, the duties and powers of the Becca-morti. We had little, however, to learn which we did not know before, but that little was most inconvenient to me, as it keeps me from being as useful as I could wish."

"Surely," said Madonna Ponte, "no one suspects we are here?"

"No one that I know of," said Gero-lamo. "The regulation I spoke of does not bear on you, ladies, in any way. It is simply an order which has been issued for us who are in the employ of the Lazaretto, that if any one shall attempt to enter the city by night, or day, except in his official garb, he shall infallibly be hung. It was past noon when we left the Boschetto, and between that time and this I believe there has not been a single street in Ferrara which I have not visited, till

my legs tremble under me from fatigue, and my arm aches with perpetually ringing the bell."

"Did you have many fresh cases?" asked Madonna Ponte.

"Several, and bad cases they were. Pray Heaven it may not spread further, or if so, the effects will be terrible indeed!" said Gerolamo. "I have been told by an old man who used to occupy himself with catching vipers and scorpions, that there are no more to be had, and that they are the only true remedy against the plague."

"My son," said the old widow, "your poor father always ridiculed the idea. I am sorry to hear you entertain it."

"My dear mother, I have no opinion on the subject," was Gerolamo's reply. "I am no doctor. They maintain, however, that it is the only sure remedy, and from them alone the true plague oil (*l'olio contro peste*) can be made. Dr. Cas-

tagnia gained a large fortune by the sale of it."

"Your father said Castagnia was little better than a plausible quack, whose sole anxiety was to fill his own pockets, caring but little for his patients."

"Very probably, mother," said Geronamo. "But let that pass. He received the fruits of his dishonesty last year."

"In what way?"

"I do not exactly know, but it is stated that during the last visitation of the plague, finding vipers were scarce, he adulterated them with earth-worms, and then from the oil he extracted sold it as the genuine *l'olio contro peste*. Whether it was for that, or some other act of dishonesty, I know not, but he has been banished from Ferrara, and another man supplies his place."

"But who informed you that vipers were no longer to be had?" asked his mother.

“An old man who has lately joined the Becca-morti, and who formerly used to strike the hours in the Rigobello tower. Afterwards he took service under Dr. Castagnia, and people say he was one of those who assisted in mixing the earth-worms with the vipers, and that he was flogged for it. He wanted to be employed in the Holy Office, I understand, having got a theory of his own that the appearance of the pestilence is due to the Duchess having introduced heresy into the city, and that the only way of gaining the favour of Heaven will be by exterminating all heretics.”

“And what do your companions say to his arguments?” asked his mother.

“My companions, mother, have too much work to do at present to pay much attention to his nonsensical remarks. Even if they had more leisure, I doubt whether they would have much effect on them.”

“Why not?”

“Because they are hardly men much given to entertain abstruse points of theology. They are, most of them,” he continued in a voice of sadness, “poor broken-down creatures like myself, who care but little what befalls them. With perfect indifference they remove the dead and the dying, knowing full well the extreme probability that they may catch the pestilence themselves, and perfectly aware that each moment while doing their duty they carry their lives in their hand.”

“Are the sick, then, intrusted to a brutal ignorant set of men who care nothing for them?” inquired Madonna Ponte.

“I should hardly be justified in stating that my companions cared nothing for the sick confided to them, although, doubtless, the scenes of misery they see must to a considerable extent blunt their sense of feeling. At the same time, there are

hardly any among them, possibly with the exception of the old man of whom I spoke to you, brutal or naturally hard-hearted. All have a certain amount of intelligence, and most of them, like myself, have seen better days. Another reason, I should state, which has kept me from calling here before, is a certain fear I am under of the old man I named to you. I don't know whether I am prejudiced against him, for certainly I can discover nothing positive, but he appears incessantly to be watching me. After all, perhaps his eyes are merely attracted towards me from seeing mine perpetually rivetted on him. This excuse came several times before me, and I have in vain endeavoured to shake it off. However, fortunately I shall hope to be rid of his society in a couple of days."

"How so?" inquired his mother.

"Because he finds his present work too laborious for him, and has made an application to Dr. Boschi to be allowed to

remain as one of the attendants on the sick at the Boschetto, instead of going round with the cart. The doctor told him he must continue his work till he found some one to take his place, and as he expects he will be able to do so to-morrow, I shall then have the satisfaction of being rid of him."

The old man alluded to by Gerolamo was no other than Carlo Pedretti, who, before entering on his new avocations, had been out of employment for some days, and had begun to feel somewhat severely the pangs of hunger. It was not, however, without considerable reluctance that he entered into the service of the Lazaretto. He had entertained hopes, after hearing the proclamation, of being employed in some humble and indirect manner by the Holy Office. Scinting the persecution afar off, he imagined they would require a more numerous staff than they at present had. He was already acquainted with a relative

of one of the lay brothers of the Dominican convent, and he applied to him for his patronage. This he obtained, as far as introducing him to the lay brother, who, being by no means prepossessed with Pedretti's appearance, declined speaking in his favour to any of the superior officials. Pedretti, however, was one of those men by no means apt to take an answer in the negative, and he pleaded his cause with so much pertinacity, that at last the lay brother promised that in case he could show that he had it in his power to be useful to the Holy Office he would speak to one of the superior officials in his behalf, but until that proof had been obtained, it would be useless for him to make further application on the subject.

Pedretti humbly thanked the lay brother for the promise he had made him, and then began to turn over in his mind in what manner he could prove his capacity for being of service to the Holy Office. For

some time he could hit upon no plan, although he was continually trying to rack his brains for that purpose. At last the idea occurred to him whether he might not be able to show his zeal in the holy cause, and at the same time gratify a private pique of his own. For a long time past, he had entertained considerable animosity against a certain Pietro Zoppo, a lame man, who was employed to strike the hours in the clock over the Rengiero, in the Palace of Justice. Pedretti's animosity against this man arose from several causes. In the first place, he considered that the Rigobello clock tower being the highest in Ferrara, he had the right to give the time to the other bell-strikers. This precedence Pietro refused to admit, and had more than once struck the hours some minutes before Pedretti had done so on the bell of the Rigobello tower. Annoyed at the presumption of his rival, Pedretti the next time resolved to precede him in striking

the hour, which he did by some minutes. Pietro easily understood the challenge, and the following hour again was the first to strike, and the result was the creation of considerable scandal, and both men were soundly reprimanded, and threatened with dismissal should it occur again. Another cause for Pedretti's animosity was that, in consequence of the clock in the Rigobello tower having been made to strike by machinery, he lost his employment, while Pietro continued in his, and this was a subject of intense annoyance to him, as he considered Pietro to be more favoured than himself.

It now occurred to Pedretti that if he laid an accusation of heresy against Pietro, he should not only be able to have his revenge upon his old rival, but would probably gain the appointment for himself, and be enabled to re-enter into his original regular habits of life. With this intent, he called on the lay brother, and told him he

had very strong reason to believe that Pietro was little better than a heretic. The lay brother questioned him on his reasons for coming to such a conclusion; but Pedretti contradicted himself so flatly, that the lay brother told him he would have nothing more to say to him, and that he might go about his business. Finding that the plague had made its appearance, Pedretti next tried to turn an honest penny by catching vipers; but being unsuccessful, he applied for an appointment in the Beccamorti, and was admitted.

Gerolamo, having somewhat recovered from his fatigue, was now asked by Teresa if he had heard anything of her father. He told her he had not, and that whenever he made any inquiries, which was not very frequent, as people seemed to dislike speaking to him from the dress he wore, he judged by the answers he received that her father was still at liberty, and had most probably made his escape across the Vene-

tian frontiers, as it was not likely a prisoner of his importance would have been arrested without the news spreading rapidly over the city. He had some idea of being able to obtain more certain information the next day ; but he could not promise. He was acquainted with a ferryman, strongly suspected of being a heretic, who knew as much about what was passing in Ferrara as the Podesta himself. Of course, it would be impossible for him to seek this man out, as in doing so he should be obliged to leave his duties ; but if chance threw him in his way, or if he had the opportunity of passing near the ferry, he would endeavour to see him, and obtain information on the subject.

Madonna Ponte then inquired if he had heard any news of the Duchess. He replied that he had nothing more to tell them about her. She was still imprisoned in the Castle, and beyond that fact nothing was known. A strict guard was placed

round the Castle, and those who made any inquiry on the subject received so severe a rebuff for their pains, as by no means to encourage others to follow their example.

After a little more conversation, Gerolamo took up his bell and banner, and wishing the ladies good evening, left the house.

The blind widow, soon after her son's departure, brought forth from her scanty stores a small bottle of oil, and with great dexterity, and without spilling a drop, she filled a lamp with it, and then trimming the wick, she lighted it, and placed it on the table.

Madonna Ponte now drew a stool beside it, and taking from her pocket a small Protestant book of prayers, commenced reading, while Teresa and the blind widow continued the conversation which had dropped when Gerolamo came in. The widow could hardly agree with

Teresa that the imprisonment of the Duchess would so soon terminate.

"If," she said, "it were merely a question between the Duchess and her husband, you might be right; but once in the hands of the Inquisitors, little mercy is likely to be shown her unless she recants."

"Of that," said Teresa, somewhat warmly, "there is no danger. Her Highness is too deeply attached to the Protestant religion ever to change. You do her an injustice; does she not?" she continued, addressing Madonna Ponte.

"I do not know what you are speaking of," said she, raising her eyes from her book, and gazing at Teresa with an anxious pallid countenance.

"I was saying that there was no danger of the Duchess recanting, from any severity the Inquisition might use against her."

"I perfectly agree with you. She would be as little likely to give up the good cause as our leader, John Calvin himself."

Teresa now spoke to her hostess of the probable escape of Ochino and her father. On this subject they were better agreed, both firmly believing that they had reached the Venetian territory, where, for the time at any rate, they would be in safety.

"I devoutly hope it may be so," said Teresa. "My only fear is that if my father hears of the proclamation he will return to save me. I would rather a thousand times run any danger than that he should imperil his life to aid me."

"Did you not tell me that some one had assisted them in their flight?" asked the blind widow. "If so, he might perhaps return to Ferrara and bring you some intelligence of your father."

"But he will not be able to find me," said Teresa, hesitatingly.

"Do you not know where this person lives? My son could no doubt be able to find some excuse for seeing him."

"I do not know," said Teresa.

“Is he to be depended on?” inquired the widow.

“To be depended on!” exclaimed Teresa, with warmth. “He is as true as the day.”

“I did not wish to cast any suspicion on him,” said the blind widow, who, fortunately for Teresa, was unable to see the blush that at the moment suffused the girl’s face. “In these times it is difficult indeed to know in whom we may trust. What is his name?”

“Camille Gurdon.”

“That is not an Italian name. Is he a foreigner?”

“Yes,” replied Teresa; “he is a Swiss, and a friend of our respected John Calvin.” Then finding the conversation becoming somewhat embarrassing, by way of changing the subject she asked Madonna Ponte, when she had finished reading, to lend her the book, as she had not her own with her.

Madonna Ponte turned her face towards Teresa, who uttered a low cry of alarm at the strange change which had come over it. There was an expression of sickness upon it that proved she must be seriously ill. Her colour was a deadly bluish paleness, and there was a wild haggard expression of the eyes which almost seemed like delirium. She gazed at Teresa for some moments in a bewildered manner. At length she said, "I do not know what is the matter with me, my dear. I feel no pain, and yet I hardly know where I am. I wish you would get me a cup of water, for I feel so faint. I do not think I could stand."

Teresa immediately filled a horn cup with water, which she presented to her friend. Madonna Ponte, instead of taking the cup from Teresa's hand, merely stared at her for a moment in a bewildered manner, and then mechanically placing the book in her pocket, she pushed the water

aside, and hurriedly rose from her seat. Then staring wildly around her for a moment, she attempted to move past Teresa, when her strength seemed to fail, and she fell senseless on the floor.

The cry of alarm uttered by Teresa now brought the widow to her assistance, and together, but with much difficulty, they contrived to raise Madonna Ponte from the floor and place her on the bed. Teresa now, under the direction of her hostess, bathed her friend's temples with water, and used the ordinary means to restore animation, but for some time with little good effect. At last circulation was restored, but with it wild delirium set in, and they had great difficulty in restraining her. As night advanced the delirium became stronger, and Teresa, much alarmed, asked what they had better do.

"We have but one course to pursue," replied the widow, "and that is to remain quietly by her till morning."

“Is it not possible to procure assistance?” asked Teresa.

“Quite impossible. The city gates are already closed, and there are none near us who could render any assistance, even if they dared.”

“Even if they dared?” said Teresa. “Do you mean to say they would not help a fellow-creature in distress?”

The widow made no reply for a moment, and then said, “I am afraid in this case they would not.”

“What then do you consider is the matter with her?”

“Tell me first, has the colour of her face changed?”

“Yes,” replied Teresa; “it is now a deep purple.”

“Then the Lord have mercy upon us,” said the blind widow, “for He alone can save us! I saw too much of the plague the last time it visited this city not to be convinced that the destroying angel has

visited us. All we can do is to watch beside your friend till morning, and then when we hear the bell pass the house to apply for assistance."

Teresa was greatly terrified at these words, and Madonna Ponte being for the moment somewhat calmer, the poor girl threw herself on her knees and earnestly prayed that the life of her friend might be spared, as well as her own and that of the blind widow. Then, after placing herself resignedly in the hands of the Almighty, she rose from her knees, and seating herself beside her companion's bed, she resolved patiently to watch till they could procure assistance the next morning.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAZARETTO.



TERESA, during the whole of the night, fully maintained her resolution to watch affectionately by the bedside of her plague-stricken friend, her anxiety rendering her totally insensible to the danger she was incurring or the fatigue her duties occasioned her. At last, so wild was the delirium of Madonna Ponte that she had great difficulty in keeping her in bed. Nor in this did she receive much assistance from her hostess, who, although most anxious to help, was, from the nature of her infirmity, almost useless. As morning advanced, the delirium somewhat subsided, and the efforts made by the

patient to quit her bed became less violent. When day broke she was comparatively quiet, although the delirium still continued, haunting her with the idea that she was in the power of the Inquisition, and shortly to be tried for heresy. In this manner she continued for hours, Teresa watching by her attentively, the love she bore her friend closing her eyes to the ghastly spectacle she presented.

As day advanced, Teresa and the blind widow began to listen anxiously for the bell of the mortuary cart. Not that they had any intention of sending their friend to the Lazaretto, but that they would get Gerolamo to procure the attendance of a physician when he entered the city. No sound, however, of the bell was heard, and they were beginning to deliberate what steps had better be taken, when the door opened, and Gerolamo, in his official dress, entered. Casting his eyes on the bed, and seeing the condition Madonna Ponte was

in, in a moment he understood all—the plague, in its worst form, had broken out in the hovel.

“My son,” said his mother, “when you enter the city, send to our assistance a physician as soon as possible.”

“It would be useless,” was Gerolamo’s answer. “No physician at the present time will leave the city. And, besides, all he dare do would be to send the unfortunate lady at once to the Lazaretto, and the door of your house would be nailed up till it was done. Take my advice, and painful as it may be to you, when the cart again passes your house call for it and send her there. This morning it will enter the city by the next gate, and I have but quitted it for a moment to see if I could be of any use to you, promising to meet it again as it entered. Several reports have reached the Lazaretto that the plague is rapidly showing itself, and we have already a sufficient number of

houses to call at to suffice for one journey. As we return we will call here, or, perhaps, what would be better, I, with a friend of mine in whom I can trust, will come and carry the poor lady down to the ferry-boat. This would be best for all reasons, as I need not mention to the others the house she came from, and there would then be no necessity for you to be turned out, or the few goods you have to be destroyed. The young lady could remain with you in safety, and without fear of discovery."

"Nay," said Teresa, "if my friend goes to the Lazaretto, I will certainly accompany her."

"Pray do not entertain the idea for a moment," said Gerolamo. "By doing so you would incur the greatest danger, not merely from discovery, but of taking the malady yourself. Take my advice, and remain patiently where you are."

"I will not do so," said Teresa; "if my

friend goes, I shall accompany her. I am sure if I had been the one plague stricken, and she had escaped, she would have accompanied me ; and cowardly indeed should I be if I forsook her."

"But, remember," said Gerolamo, "you can be of no assistance to her there, even if Dr. Boschi allows you to enter the building, which I very much doubt. Besides that, you will be in very great danger of discovery, and if you became known you would be sent to the prison of the Lazaretto, and after being kept there till it was certain you were not infected with the disease, you would be sent to the dungeons of the Inquisition. But I must not stop longer," he continued, "or I shall be considered as wanting in my duties. In about two hours expect to see me again, and then I hope to find you more amenable to reason."

Gerolamo now left the house, and entering the gate of the Mizzana, hurried round

to meet the cart as it entered the next gate, so that he might be able to lead it through the streets, warning people to avoid it in passing by, and summoning those whose houses were visited by the plague to bring out the sick. Their duties that day were far heavier than those of the previous one. Not only did they call at the houses the addresses of which had been sent them the night before by the city authorities, but there were several fresh cases which had broken out that morning—so many, in fact, that some of the milder ones had to be left for the afternoon journey, if, indeed, they would not require another cart to transport them all to the Lazaretto. When their melancholy load was completed, they returned through the different streets to the Porta Mizzana, receiving as they went many demands for assistance, all of which they were obliged to refuse.

When they had quitted the city, and the cart was directing its way towards

the ferry, Gerolamo placed his bell and banner in the care of the driver, and whispering to the associate of whom he spoke, begged him to drop with him a little behind the others while the cart proceeded to the ferry. When they were out of ear-shot, he said to his friend—

“Pray come and help me to carry a patient to the ferry-boat. She is in the house you see close by. I want nothing said about it, for it is my mother’s house, and I wish her to escape the visit of the Sanita, otherwise all she possesses may be destroyed by their orders, as well as the house itself. She is blind, lame, and helpless, and all she has in the world is trifling indeed. I wish to preserve them for her, as well as the roof over her head, as long as I can.”

His companion readily consented, and the two men now advanced to the home of the blind widow, which was a distance of about five minutes’ walk from their course.

On entering the house, Gerolamo found Madonna Ponte much in the same condition as when he was last there. She seemed almost insensible, and the few words she uttered proved that delirium still continued. No objections were now made either by the widow or Teresa to the removal of the plague-stricken lady; and carefully taking her in their arms, Gerolamo and his friend were proceeding to leave the house when Teresa took up her *candale*, and prepared to place it over her head.

“You surely cannot be so rash,” said Gerolamo, noticing her movements, “as to persist in accompanying your friend. Think for a moment of the danger you are running.”

“It is no matter what the danger may be,” said Teresa, “I will not allow her to go alone, and intend remaining with her till she gets better, or death releases her from her sufferings.”

For some instants Gerolamo looked at

her attentively, almost doubting whether the delirium which had afflicted her friend had not communicated itself to her, and expecting to find in her the first symptoms of the malady, but the clear complexion and calm resolute eye of the young girl told him that at least in that respect he was fortunately mistaken. He attempted once more to reason with her, but it was of no avail, and he then called on his mother to interfere.

“My child,” said the widow, “your love for your friend does you great credit, I admit, but although I admire the courage you show, remember that even courage itself may be pushed to a point where it cannot be distinguished from rashness, if not folly. Be persuaded, and remain with me. You can do your friend no good by accompanying her, and I am sure Gerolamo will take every opportunity of informing you of her condition. Remember, you may be of far greater use to her when she

recovers from the malady, if it pleases God to spare her life, and before her health has fully returned, than in her present state."

"Mother," said Teresa, "I do not dispute the truth of your arguments, but leave my friend I cannot. Say no more to me, I beg, but let me have my own way, unreasonable as it may appear to you. I trust I may soon see you again—if not, accept my thanks for the kindness you have shown us ; and may God bless and reward you!" So saying, Teresa kissed the widow, and left the house in company with the two men, bearing between them the almost lifeless body of Madonna Ponte.

In consequence of the conversation which had taken place in the house of the widow, they had some difficulty in reaching the ferry-boat before it started ; in fact, the ferry-men had somewhat impatiently delayed a few minutes to give them time to arrive. On reaching the boat, Carlo Pe-

dretti, who had not yet been able to get a substitute for his duties in the city, so as to allow him to remain permanently in the Lazaretto, turned a suspicious glance on Gerolamo, and asked, in a somewhat authoritative tone of voice, where he had found that patient. Gerolamo rather indignantly told him that, as he personally was the superior of the convoy, he was not bound to answer any questions his subordinates might put to him. Anything asked him by Dr. Boschi, the Signori della Sanita, or their officials, he was quite prepared to answer. Pedretti said it was his duty also to report any irregularity; when Gerolamo told him he was in error, and that as soon as he landed he would submit the question to the doctor himself for a decision. Pedretti having already asked a favour of Dr. Boschi, in a moment saw the policy of not getting into trouble with him, and merely answered Gerolamo, that he "didn't wish to have any interview

with the doctor on the occasion, as it wasn't a subject of such importance, after all, to make a fuss about it." But although he no longer addressed Gerolamo, he kept muttering to himself in a vindictive manner, in which the word "upstart" was more than once plainly audible. Gerolamo, however, took no notice of him, but entered the boat, and was about to hand in Teresa, when the padrone, or head ferryman, a good-natured looking middle-aged man, gazing at her attentively (for in her haste she had put on her *candale* in such a manner as to leave her features plainly visible), said to her—

"Surely, pretty sposina, you are not rash enough to visit the Lazaretto? Why, my child, you don't know what sort of a place it is, or the sights you'll see there. Are you mad enough, Gerolamo, to take her over?"

"If she would take my advice," said Gerolamo, "she would immediately return

home; but girls are obstinate, and it's difficult to persuade them when they are determined to have their own way. Try what effect your arguments will have on her; I will second them willingly."

"I half suspect, my pretty child," said the padrone, "that the best service I can render you would be to cut short all argument and leave you where you are. A man may love his own daughter, but it's no reason he should let her play with fire when he finds her likely to set herself in a blaze."

Teresa now became dreadfully alarmed at the boatman's threat. Placing her hands together, her beautiful eyes filling with tears as she spoke, she implored him to allow her to accompany her friend, and that she would always be grateful to him for it. The poor woman, she said, who had just been placed in the boat was an intimate friend of hers—possibly the only one she had in the world—and she could

not bear the idea of leaving her now that a misfortune had befallen her.

“That’s all very well,” said the padrone, “still common sense ought to be used on all occasions, and no other. But I can’t stand those tears, so get in if you will, although your arguments go for nothing with me. I never could bear to see a woman crying, and tears in such eyes as those I have not the courage to stand up against, though I must say it goes to my heart to see a pretty girl wilfully seeking her own destruction.”

Gerolamo having assisted Teresa into the boat and seated himself beside her, the two ferrymen, with their ghastly, yet motley, freight of healthy, sick, dying, and dead, pushed off from the banks, and rowed towards the landing-place of the Boschetto. During their passage across, Pedretti, who was seated on the side of the boat opposite to Teresa, suddenly ceased his muttering, and regarded the young

girl with looks of intense interest, as if determined to fix her features in his mind. Although Teresa remained ignorant of the interest she was exciting, not so Gerolamo, who, in his turn, regarded his subordinate with a threatening sternness, which boded no good feeling. So intent, however, was Pedretti in watching Teresa that, on his part, he was ignorant of the gaze Gerolamo fixed on him. At last Gerolamo could restrain his impatience no longer, and he said to Pedretti—

“Do you know anything of this young lady, that you stare so at her?”

“I’m not sure,” said Pedretti, sullenly; “it strikes me I’ve seen her somewhere before.”

“At any rate,” said Gerolamo, “you will have little difficulty in knowing her when you see her again. But hark you, my friend,” he continued, “there appears to me to be more of rudeness than civility

in your gaze, and I advise you to turn your eyes another way."

Pedretti was about to answer Gerolamo in the same tone, when Teresa, who had been attracted by the conversation, put a stop to it by drawing her *candale* carefully over her face, screening herself from his gaze.

"I don't think we've much to thank you for," said the padrone to Pedretti. "Pretty faces are not so common here that we can afford to lose the sight of one when we have it. If you think your own countenance offers us any compensation, you are fearfully mistaken."

And now was a singular proof how soon men get accustomed to the sight of horrors which are daily brought before them, and how indifferent they become to them. Notwithstanding the ghastly nature of their freight, the deplorable condition of many of their passengers, the other ferrymen and the Becca-morti burst into a fit of

laughter at the padrone's attempt at wit, and Pedretti was attacked by satirical jokes on the beauty of his countenance till the boat had reached the landing-place, when their attention was called to their duties.

Several assistants of the Lazaretto now advanced towards them to help them remove the dead and sick from the boat. The former were carried off at once to the cemetery, and the latter to the hall of the Lazaretto, where they were examined by the surgeon on duty. Dr. Boschi, the head physician, being absent, the office was performed by one of his assistants, who sent off the sick as they were brought in to the different cells or wards he assigned to them. At length Madonna Ponte was brought before him, and Teresa entered the hall at the same time. The surgeon had hitherto performed his duties in a perfectly mechanical manner, merely giving a glance at the patient to ascertain whether

his malady was really the plague, and then entering the name of the individual in a book which was before him, he sent him, if a man, off to the cell appointed for his reception, where he was taken charge of by the Lazarist brothers; and if a female, to another side of the building, to be placed under the care of some sisters of charity. A perfect division of duty was marked out for the male and female departments of the Lazaretto. Both Lazarists and sisters of charity had each a numerous staff of lay assistants specially appointed to aid them, the sisters attending solely to the female side, and the male assistants to the men, with the exception that when a death occurred in the female department, the corpse was removed by a body of men appointed for the purpose, and carried at once to the cemetery. It was among these latter that Pedretti wished particularly to enrol himself, which Dr. Boschi promised he might do when he could find a fit and proper

person to take his place in going round with the cart.

After the surgeon had ascertained that Madonna Ponte was really afflicted with the plague, he inquired her name and address; and here occurred a terrible cause of alarm for Teresa. Finding he received no answer, the surgeon raised his eyes from the book before him, and perceiving Teresa, placed his pen beside him, and inquired with much interest what could have induced her to visit such a place.

"I am her friend," stammered Teresa.

"Not many of those who come here have such friends," said the surgeon. "But, my child, this no place for you. You had better go back again at once."

"Pray let me remain with my friend," said the young girl.

"I have not the power to allow you," he said, "and what is worse, I cannot on my own authority insist on your leaving the island. I must submit the case to Dr.

Boschi; but, in the meantime, take my advice and leave this terrible place without delay."

"I would prefer remaining," said Teresa.

"You can do so then, if you please, till I have brought the subject under the notice of the head physician. In the meantime tell me the name and address of your friend."

This was a terrible question indeed for poor Teresa, and she hesitated for some moments before replying.

"Pray tell me her name," continued the surgeon, "that I may enter it into the book."

Teresa now advancing close to him whispered as lowly as she could, "Madonna Ponte."

"I did not hear you," said the surgeon, looking up in Teresa's face, on which was marked an expression of great anxiety. "Tell me again, what did you say?"

Teresa again hesitated, looking at the

different assistants in the room. The surgeon instantly caught her idea, that she was afraid of being overheard.

“Leave the room, the whole of you,” he said in a tone of authority; “and two of you take the patient to her cell,” he continued, giving them the number of it.

Gerolamo and another man instantly obeyed, and went off with Madonna Ponte, while others left the hall by the front door. The surgeon then thinking that he and Teresa were alone, was upon the point of repeating his question, when he saw standing at no great distance from them, but in such a position as he had thought least likely to be seen, no other than Carlo Pedretti. The surgeons of the Lazaretto were invested with great power, even to the punishment of death, and they frequently used it with a firm hand. Rising from his seat, the surgeon said to Pedretti, with a stern voice—

“Did you not hear my orders that all

should leave the hall? How dare you disobey me? Come hither, sir, and let me see you nearer, that I may know you again."

Pedretti, now with great alarm painted on his countenance, obeyed.

"I shall now remember you," said the surgeon, "and on your part remember what I tell you. Let me again find you disobey any orders given you, and your back shall be scourged so severely that the marks will never be obliterated to the day of your death. Now leave the hall at once."

Pedretti immediately left, muttering some excuse about not having heard the order, and the surgeon and Teresa were by themselves.

"Now tell me, my child," he said to her, kindly, "the name of your friend."

"Madonna Ponte," replied Teresa.

The surgeon looked inquisitively in the girl's face, as if the name was not strange to him, and then said—

“Madonna Ponte? And what is her occupation, and where does she live?”

Teresa looked at him in an imploring manner without making any reply, as if begging him not to press the question. The man of science—who had been watching her attentively, and easily judged she was a member of the higher classes of society; or perhaps the idea occurred to him that she and her friend were among the number of those proscribed on account of their religion, the ingenuous amiable expression on Teresa’s face and demeanour telling him it could be from no other cause—now said to her, significantly—

“My dear child, I will ask you no more on the subject. I will fill in the name and get the address another time if I require it. But now to return to your visit here. I have not the power to order you away, but as soon as Dr. Boschi arrives—and I expect him every minute—I shall persuade him to

insist on your immediately quitting the island, and that from no other than a friendly feeling towards you. In the meantime, if you persist in remaining, you must promise me you will not attempt to leave the hall without my permission, otherwise I shall be under the painful necessity of ordering a guard to be placed over you. Let me assure you, every care shall be taken of your friend, quite as much as if you were attending on her yourself. Now make me the promise I require."

Teresa, finding it was useless to argue further, for although there was great kindness in the surgeon's tone, there was a certain decision of manner which showed he was not a man to be trifled with, or to give way in an opinion he had once conscientiously formed, promised him that she would remain quietly in the hall till the head physician arrived. The surgeon then politely placed a seat for her near the window, looking on the river and the city,

and recalling his attendants, he continued his duty of admitting the sick.

For more than an hour did Teresa sit at the window impatiently watching for the arrival of Dr. Boschi, the senior physician, endeavouring, though without much success, to frame in her mind the manner she should address that eminent functionary, so as to produce such an effect on him as would gain his permission for her to remain with Madonna Ponte. At last she saw several persons arrive at the opposite landing of the ferry, and from the respect shown to one of them, and the energy exhibited in preparing the boat to take him over, she rightly imagined he was the person whose arrival she awaited with so much anxiety. She watched for some moments the progress of the boat, and then getting impatient at what, in her mind, appeared the tardiness of the rowers, she rose from her seat and went to the door to meet him as he entered. Here she

was joined by the surgeon, who said to her—

“You had better remain where you were, for when the doctor arrives he will probably have some business to attend to before he can speak to you.”

“But,” said Teresa, “it is almost an affair of life or death to me; why can I not speak to him at once?”

“From the fact that the life or death of many will occupy his attention when he enters. Of this you may be certain, that you shall see him and plead your own cause.”

“Will you plead in my favour?” asked Teresa. “You can hardly form an idea how grateful I shall be if you will.”

“Candidly in your interest I certainly will not. All I can say to you is, that I will not attempt to bias him till you have spoken to him. Now go back to your seat like a sensible girl. From those I see with him, he will have some important in-

structions to give before he can attend to you."

Teresa offered no further opposition, but went back to her seat, and a few minutes afterwards the doctor entered the hall, followed by the strangers who had crossed over the ferry with him. Had Teresa not been preoccupied with her own sorrows, the appearance of the new comers might reasonably have excited her curiosity. They seemed all to belong to the same station in life. They had somewhat the appearance of respectable burghers, but they had neither the air of professional men nor tradesmen. They, in fact, belonged to a very influential body of men in Ferrara—that of the guild of barbers. They filled a sort of void in the grades of the population of the city, being a class apart,—below that of the lawyer, physician, or regular surgeon, yet decidedly superior to the smaller tradesmen. In the time of our narrative, in common with the barbers

of London, as well as in the principal cities of Europe, they not only followed the occupation usually assigned to the hair-dresser, but they practised as well most of the minor operations of surgery, such as bleeding, tooth-drawing, and bandaging, many of them in these portions of the profession obtaining considerable reputation. In times of the visitations of the plague and other fatal epidemics which so frequently visited Europe in the mediæval days, they were of immense service. In the municipal records of Ferrara they are frequently named as receiving large rewards for their ability and courage in attending the plague-stricken, and in many instances are spoken of with as much respect as the regular members of the medical profession. Those who had accompanied Dr. Boschi were a body of some ten or a dozen who had volunteered for service in the Lazaretto, and were looked upon, not only by their own craft, but by the Signori della

Sanita as men much to be respected, and scarcely less honour was shown them than to the doctors themselves.

When they had assembled in the hall, the head physician addressed them at some length, pointing out to them their duties, explaining how the different modes of treatment were to be applied to the patients, and the necessity of showing kindness and consideration to the sick under their care. Then assigning them to the different surgeons under whom they were to act, he called an assistant to show to them the rooms set apart for their private use.

When the barbers had left the hall, the surgeon called the attention of Dr. Boschi to the presence of Teresa, telling him that she had a favour to ask him. The worthy physician, who had not hitherto remarked her, seemed greatly surprised to see her, and approaching her, asked, with much kindness in his tone, what he could do for her. Teresa, although she felt somewhat

nervous in the presence of the eminent man of science, told him that an intimate friend of hers had the evening before been seized with the plague, and had been that morning brought into the Lazaretto, and that she wished to remain with her to nurse her.

"It is impossible," said the doctor, evidently surprised at the demand. "I cannot entertain the idea for a moment." Then turning to the surgeon, he continued, "How did she come here, when the rules so strictly prohibit any stranger setting foot on the island?"

"She came over in the ferry-boat, with her sick friend, and without my knowledge," said the surgeon. "She much wanted to go into the wards, but I would not allow her."

"You acted quite rightly," said the physician. "Who is her friend, and from what part of the city do they come?"

The surgeon, instead of answering,

showed the doctor the entry he had made in the book. Finding the name of Madonna Ponte, and no address, Dr. Boschi inquired the reason of the latter being omitted, remarking that the orders of the Signori della Sanita were imperative that the address of every patient should be inserted after their name. The surgeon drew the physician aside, and whispered a few words in his ear, to which, evidently with great interest, he listened. When the surgeon had concluded, Dr. Boschi made no further inquiry. For a moment he looked at the young girl before him with evident interest, and then said kindly to her—

“Once more, my dear child, I cannot allow you to remain here, and must request you will return without delay. In saying this, I assure you I speak only for your welfare. I see the ferry-boat is getting ready to cross. Now, without further hesitation, go with it. Be assured every

attention shall be shown your friend." Then perceiving that Teresa was about offering some further objection, he continued, "Now do not oblige me to speak harshly, for I should do so most unwillingly, but I must be obeyed." He then said to the surgeon, "Would you accompany her to the boat, and take no excuse for her remaining?"

The surgeon, taking Teresa, who was now weeping bitterly, by the hand, led her towards the water's edge, making a sign to the padrone to await his arrival. At the moment the Becca-morti were entering the boat, and Pedretti, who was among them, not wishing again to come under the notice of the surgeon, made some excuse and slipped away. The surgeon, when he reached the boat, told the padrone to set the young lady on shore with all civility, adding that in the evening he should have a word to say to him for having brought, without permission, a stranger to the Lazaretto.

Teresa now entered the boat, which pushed off from the shore, leaving Pedretti behind. As soon as they were out of ear-shot of the surgeon, who stood on the shore watching the boat as it crossed over, the padrone said to Teresa—


“I suspect, my pretty lass, you have got me into trouble. No matter; I have had worse sins to answer for, which I trust have been forgiven, than ferrying you over contrary to the doctor’s orders. He cannot hurt me much, that’s one good thing; for he knows he would have no little difficulty in getting another to supply my place.”

Teresa was in too much sorrow to listen to the man’s remarks. Gerolamo now took his seat beside her, and whispered to her to be of good comfort, promising that if he had the opportunity he would call the next morning and inform her how her friend was progressing. Teresa thanked him for his kindness, and a few minutes afterwards the boat reached the shore. On landing,

and while the horses were being placed in the cart, preparatory to the Becca-morti taking their afternoon patrol through the city, Gerolamo escorted Teresa to his mother's house. They found the poor widow sadly depressed in spirits at the loss of the society of her two companions. Finding Teresa had returned, she received her with much affection, and Gerolamo then left them to attend to his duties with the cart.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RELIGIOUS PROCESSION.

S the reader is aware, simultaneously with the appearance of the plague, the persecutions of the Inquisition commenced. At first sight it might appear that the infliction of this terrible malady would, for a moment, have stopped the ardour of the Holy Office; but even if the great body of the Inquisitors, as well as the clergy, had been content to allow the question to remain in abeyance for some time longer, the energetic Oriz admitted no impediment of the kind. On the contrary, he rather looked on the threatened pestilence as a means to obtain an end. He endeavoured to instil into the Dominican

body the necessity of teaching the people from their pulpits, as well as by every means of personal communication in their power, that the plague which was then hanging over their city was an indisputable sign of the divine anger, evidently caused by the apathy which had hitherto existed among them on the subject of heresy, not only allowing the pernicious doctrines taught by Calvin and Luther to spread without any attempt to restrain them, but positively, in many instances, permitting them without any animadversion to receive the patronage and support of the elevated, the wealthy, the noble, and the learned.

He bade them especially in the instructions they gave to their congregations, to dwell upon the fact that, no matter how high in authority an individual might be, even to the Duke himself, he was still open to the censures of the Church, and that while the strictest obedience and respect should in all worldly matters be shown to

him, both personally, and to the laws of the country which he governed, it was, at the same time, the duty of every true Catholic to raise his voice against his ruler, should the Holy Church consider him worthy of reprobation.

As far as regarded the illustrious Duke Ercole II., then reigning in Ferrara, these remarks could not personally apply to him, inasmuch as he had invariably shown himself a true and faithful son of the Church, though it was much to be regretted that he had permitted, without sufficient restriction, the Duchess Renée, not only to adopt the errors of Calvinism herself, but to shield with her authority those who had fallen into the same damnable heresy, as well as its teachers and professors. Happily his Highness had at last been convinced of the necessity of placing the illustrious lady, his wife, under restraint, until she should admit the error of her ways. He (Oriz) trusted that the priests would impress upon

their congregations the necessity of their prayers to the Virgin, that she might direct the mind of that otherwise estimable lady to listen to the voice of the preachers of their faith, so that she might soon be brought back again into the bosom of the true Church. He further requested them to impress upon their hearers the fact, that his Highness had, though with great pain, taken this step of restraining the liberty of the Duchess until she should see the error of her ways, and also had imprisoned the different members of her household who professed the falsely-called Reformed doctrines. It was the duty of all good subjects to follow the example of their Prince, and to assist the Holy Office and the Church in general by every means in their power in putting a stop to the plague of heresy which had lately sprung up among them, and which was a thousand times more pernicious and terrible in its effects than the mortal malady then

threatening the city with its visitation, which all good Christians should look upon as the finger of Heaven raised in wrath against the citizens of Ferrara, for the indifference they had hither shown to the interest of the true Church.

He further impressed upon them the advantage of keeping alive in the breasts of the population, that as the threatened plague was only the instrument of the divine anger, the better way to appease it would be by prayers in the churches, processions and pilgrimages, frequent confessions, and especially an energetic assistance offered to the Holy Office in bringing under its notice those tainted with heresy, so that they might be reasoned with and persuaded to return to the bosom of the true Church, in which case they would be received with open arms; or should they in spite of all affectionate remonstrance and persuasion, still remain obdurate in their iniquity, to receive such a punish-

ment as should be a warning to others not to listen to the pernicious though plausible doctrines taught by heretical preachers.

Although such was the plan of campaign which Oriz had adopted in his war against the Protestants of Ferrara, he was too wise a diplomatist to issue them on his own authority. Although it could not be denied that at the moment the Inquisition was all-powerful in Ferrara, there was, in common with every other city in Europe, a large proportion of the population, even among the enlightened Catholics, who looked upon the institution with little favour, considering it rather in the light of a well-organized plausible system of espionage of a completely worldly nature, rather than as emanating legitimately from the true Catholic Church. This Oriz well knew, and therefore obtained permission of the Archbishop of Ferrara that the proclamation should be issued to the clergy

in his name, and dated from the Archbishopal Palace, so as to avoid, to a considerable degree, the appearance of its being solely an act of the Holy Office.

But the subtlety of Oriz did not stop there: knowing full well that whenever the plague threatened to visit Ferrara, it was the custom of the noblemen and richer portion of the population immediately to quit the city, and remove to their country-seats till the danger was over, he obtained from the Duke an order prohibiting any persons, under pain of confiscation of their goods and banishment, to quit the city without special authority. He then took good care that in all such cases so many impediments and difficulties should be thrown in the way of receiving permission to remove from the city, as should greatly limit the number of applicants. Thus, while the order of the Signori della Sanita strictly prohibited any person entering

the city who had not passed through quarantine, or had arrived from any infected locality outside the city, offering at the time a liberal reward to those who should detect offenders ; the Duke prohibited persons from leaving it without permission, and Oriz was perfectly certain that in a short time he should have the heresy which existed in the duchy of Ferrara enclosed within the city walls, so that he might effectually stamp it out without allowing the heretics to seek for shelter or assistance in the country districts.

With this short digression, we will now return to Teresa Rosetti, whom we left, after her visit to the Lazaretto, in the dwelling of the blind widow. During the evening, which was a sad one indeed, little conversation took place between them. Teresa was unable to recover her spirits from the shock they had received during the day, and the poor widow felt keenly not only the loss, but the almost certainty

of present death which awaited one whom the day before she had known in good health, and for whom, from the misfortune she was suffering, she entertained great good feeling.

When night was closing in they received a visit from Gerolamo, but it was merely to inform them that he had not been able to gain any intelligence of Teresa's father, nor had he seen the ferryman at San Giorgio of whom he had spoken the day before. He hoped, however, he should do so on the morrow, and if he succeeded he would, directly afterwards, call and inform them if his friend Giacomo had heard any news of the Judge, and also bring word to Teresa how the sick lady was progressing. Teresa thanked him for his promise, and after a little more conversation, in which he informed them that there seemed to be a lull in the spread of the pestilence, as they had collected but comparatively few cases that afternoon, he bade them

good evening and returned to the Lazzaretto.

If the conversation between the blind widow and Teresa wanted spirit before the visit of Gerolamo, it sunk into absolute silence after his departure. Indeed all their energy seemed to have vanished, and they sat silently together in the dark, the thought not even occurring to the widow of the necessity of lighting the lamp for the accommodation of her guest, while Teresa, on her part, seemed indifferent, if not unaware of the omission. About an hour after Gerolamo had left them, they separated for the night, Teresa merely throwing herself, dressed as she was, on the bed, no thought occurring to her that it was the same on which her plague-stricken friend had been stretched the night before, and the danger she might thereby have of contracting the malady, nor did it occur to the widow to remind her of it.

Hour after hour passed over the head of Teresa, and no sleep came to her, although as night advanced, the different objects she had seen, and the thoughts which had occurred to her during the past day were perpetually, but without order or sequence, passing through her mind. At last the incessant change of ideas became positively painful to her, and sitting up in her bed she pressed her hands to her brow and endeavoured to collect her thoughts. She remained in this state for some time longer, and at length determined to offer up a prayer for greater resignation and peace of mind, as well as courage to support the difficulties and dangers of her position. Her prayer over, she felt great relief, and remained in a far more quiescent state till daybreak, when she rose from her bed and mechanically occupied herself in placing the room in order, in which she was shortly afterwards joined by the widow, who, in her turn, prepared the breakfast. Although

both seemed in better spirits than the evening before, still little conversation passed between them; in fact, their morning meal was eaten almost in silence. Teresa now partly opened the door of the house, and placing a stool near it, seated herself in such a position as would command a view of the ferry, for the point of departure on the Boschetto Island was visible from the widow's house.

For more than an hour after she had taken her seat near the door, there were no signs of a movement in the island; but then, to her great joy, she saw a number of men, and among them several who appeared to be in the dress of the Beccamorti, assemble near the large ferry-boat, and shortly afterwards enter it. The boat then pushed from the shore, and Teresa's heart beat high with anxiety as she felt persuaded that, in a short time, she should receive intelligence of the condition of Madonna Ponte, and if still alive, whether

there existed any hopes of her recovery. She watched the passage of the boat till it had reached the centre of the stream, when to her dismay she saw it change its course, and proceed rapidly down the river, as if the crew intended to land at another gate. Without saying a word, she rose from her seat and, opening the door, looked towards the landing-place opposite the gate of the Mizzana, but the horse and cart for the sick which she expected to find there were not to be seen. The truth then flashed across Teresa's mind, that the Becca-morti had been ordered to enter the city by one of the other gates; and as Gerolamo would, of course, be obliged to go with them, he would not be able to bring her any tidings of Madonna Ponte till he returned to the Lazaretto, either at mid-day or in the afternoon.

Teresa now entered the house, and told the blind widow that Gerolamo had, doubtless, been ordered to enter the city

by another gate, and that they should not be able to receive any intelligence of her friend till some hours later. The widow could offer her no further consolation than an expression of regret at the delay, and they both subsided into their former silence. But although Teresa said nothing, her mind was actively employed; indeed, so much so, as to throw her into a state of strong nervous irritability, and she again began to conjure up all imaginary and even improbable dangers respecting her father. She felt greatly annoyed, and almost a sensation of anger at not hearing from Camille Gurdon, to whom she looked as the protector of her father; and even began to argue that it was a want of duty on his part not to have informed her, if he had succeeded in helping him to escape from the Ferrarese territory.

Teresa's thoughts now again reverted to Madonna Ponte, and how long it would be before she could receive any intelligence

of her, till at last the certainty of her death would hardly have been felt by the poor girl with greater pain than that occasioned by the state of doubt she was in. Then she thought of her mistress the Duchess Renée, and conjured up in her imagination the painful solitude she was experiencing, for she could hardly realize the fact, though Gerolamo had assured her of its truth, that the Duchess was imprisoned in a cell of the Castle, without any of her friends or acquaintance being allowed to approach her.

At last, as some relief to her thoughts, Teresa again opened the door and looked out as if expecting to see Gerolamo approach. He was not, however, to be seen, and she re-entered the house, when it occurred to her that she would visit the city and endeavour to discover the dwelling of Camille Gurdon, and inquire of him what had been the fate of her father. A certain amount of maiden bash-

fulness for some moments stopped the prosecution of her idea, and it remained in abeyance, when she reflected, that probably she might meet Gerolamo in the city, and she would then be able to hear how he had left Madonna Ponte when he quitted the Lazaretto in the morning.

Teresa now no longer hesitated, but arranging her *candale* in such a manner as to expose as little as possible of her face, she told the widow of her determination to enter the city and endeavour to obtain some information respecting her father. The widow attempted to dissuade her, but Teresa was obstinate, and leaving the house, advanced towards the Porta della Mizzana, where she found several people waiting for permission to enter, all of whom had to present themselves before the surgeon on duty. Teresa, unaware of the regulation, attempted to pass through the gate, but she was stopped by one of the guards, and told she must wait

her turn before she could go on. One by one, those who had assembled were admitted into the presence of the surgeon, who had a small office assigned to him near the entrance of the gate. Those who answered his questions satisfactorily were admitted into the city, if they could prove they resided at no great distance from the walls. Others, on the contrary, were sent back again. As the principal number waiting for admittance were peasants wishing to attend the market, but few questions were asked, and in a short time Teresa's turn came, and she was introduced into the surgeon's office. In it she found two gentlemen, one of whom was the surgeon on duty, seated at the table. Standing near him was another with whom he was in partial conversation, and to Teresa's great satisfaction she recognised in him the surgeon who had received her at the Lazaretto the day before.

The one seated at the table, who seemed somewhat surprised at a girl of Teresa's appearance being in the society of a number of peasants, was about to address her, when the surgeon standing by his side whispered in his ear—

“Ask no questions; let her pass.”

“You may go on,” said the other without hesitation, though appearing surprised at his friend's remark.

Teresa then left the room, and her place was immediately filled by another applicant.

Once fairly inside the city walls, Teresa bethought herself it was necessary to fix on some plan of action. The first idea was to discover, if possible, the residence of Camille Gurdon, but to do this she had no clue whatever. At last the idea occurred to her to apply at the University. She knew he had been attending the law courses held there, and it was more than possible that some of the officials might

be able to give her the information she required. Knowing but little of the city, as it was perhaps the first time in her life she had ever been a hundred yards from the Palace by herself, she felt greatly embarrassed which street she should take. At last she timidly addressed a respectable woman she saw passing by, and asked if she could direct her to the University. The woman did so without hesitation, and Teresa started off in the direction, avoiding as much as possible the inquisitive glances of those she met in her way. She had occasion, however, more than once afterwards to inquire her road, but at length succeeded in reaching the street where the building was situated. She now rapidly advanced to the gates as if fearing that her courage might subside if she faltered for a moment, and on entering the archway, found under it six or eight students laughing and talking together.

Teresa for a moment hesitated, when one of the students perceiving her, advanced, and with a mock appearance of courtesy, but considerable real impertinence in his manner, asked what he could do to serve her, and begging that she would walk in, as it was seldom they had the honour of a visit from so pretty a girl.

Teresa now began to be terribly embarrassed, but not liking to go without an answer, she hesitatingly inquired if he could inform her the address of the Swiss lawyer, Camille Gurdon.

“We have not had the pleasure of seeing him for some time,” said one of the students, advancing with the same mock modesty as his fellow, “but I am quite as amiable as he is. Pray let me be your advocate and advise you. I can assure you, you will find me most respectful and attentive.”

“Do not listen to him,” said a third,

advancing to her and addressing her in the same tone, "for I can assure you he is not to be trusted. He is a very wild, thoughtless young man, while I am considered by the Professors as the steadiest in the whole of the law class."

The other students now gathered round her, and the poor girl's terror became so great that, much as she wished to obtain the address of Camille Gurdon, she turned round and ran hurriedly from the place. The students seemed inclined to follow her, but at the moment one of the Professors entered into the building, restoring something like order among them, and Teresa had thus an opportunity of escaping.

She was now determined to go to her father's house and see if it was still closed. Being but ill-acquainted with the city, she took a wrong direction, and after losing herself in a labyrinth of streets at the back of the Este Palace, she found herself in the

Piazza between the Cathedral and the arcades of the Palace of Justice. For some moments she now stopped to consider whether she should cross the Piazza in which had assembled many persons, or return, and having decided on the latter, she was about entering the street she had left, when a rush of persons wishing to enter the Piazza pushed behind her with such violence, as not only prevented her retiring, but forced her from the arcades with them. Crowds still pressed on behind her, while those in the front were driven back by some soldiers of the guard and municipal mace-bearers, to divide the crowd so as to allow a procession to pass through it on its way to the Cathedral. This was one of those religious processions proposed by Oriz to avert the anger of Heaven as shown by the coming visitation of the plague, as well as to develop among the populace a more lively demonstration in favour of the Church, and greater energy

in the detection of heretics than they had hitherto shown.

The present procession was one of great pomp and magnificence. Celebrated as was Ferrara among the cities of Italy for exhibitions of the kind, its population had rarely witnessed one of a more imposing description; and this was considered all the more creditable to the ecclesiastical authorities charged with its organization, from the short notice they had received to prepare it. The procession, which had already visited most of the more celebrated churches in the city, was headed by a body of horsemen of the Duke's guard in full uniform. Then came a body of ducal trumpeters, and these were followed by one of the confraternities of laymen in their white robes, with hoods which completely covered their faces, with holes in them to allow the wearers to see without being themselves recognised, and carrying lighted wax tapers in their hands. After them followed a

number of men two and two, dressed to represent the prophets, and these were succeeded by a band of boys in white robes with wings, the feathers made of cut papers, who sustained the part of angels.

Then followed a platform on wheels, on which was seated a man with a false, long, grey beard, and dressed in a flowing white robe, to represent the Almighty. A number of the parochial clergy in their robes then followed, and after them three asses laden with food, a giant bearing a club on his shoulders, a live bear led by its keeper, and the three magi, arrayed in imitations of Eastern dresses. A short distance behind these came another platform on wheels, on which was seated on a chair of state a Virgin and child. Then another lay confraternity in brown robes and hoods, in form resembling those already mentioned. These were followed by the men dressed as devils, who were being flogged by St. Paul and St. Ber-

nardo. It is hardly necessary to state that the blows given were of the feeblest description, the two men representing devils possibly being friends or relatives of the two saints employed in punishing them.

A movement now took place in the crowd of spectators, occasioned by the advance of a high gilt crucifix, and followed by a bishop bearing, in a magnificently chased reliquary, a hand of St. Agatha. The moment it passed was for Teresa one of terrible embarrassment. All crossed themselves as the crucifix went by, and bent on their knees at the sight of the relic, while she, unable to retire, stood a self-convicted heretic in their midst. When the relic had passed, and those near her rose from their knees, they all regarded her with looks of great surprise not unmingled with indignation. It is possible their anger might have developed itself in some rude remarks or

actions, but fortunately at the moment their attention was drawn off Teresa to a group then passing in the procession. It consisted of a dead Christ on a platform borne on men's shoulders, and surrounded by the disciples, with whom were mingled a philosopher, St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Sebastian. Then came another platform on wheels, drawn by a buffalo, with an image in wax placed on it, representing the dead body of the Virgin Mary, and the procession was closed by a body of soldiers of the Duke's guard.

The crowd now divided into two parts, one pressing forward to enter the Cathedral with the procession at the principal gate, while the other made to the side door, hoping thereby to obtain a view of the ceremonies which were to be performed in the building, and which was fitted up with great magnificence, the scenery and other decorations being far more worthy to be placed in a theatre than in a church,

and strangely at variance with the simplicity which characterizes Protestant worship.

When the crowd had somewhat dispersed, Teresa made another attempt to retire from the Piazza, and had nearly reached the arcades under the Palace of Justice, when she heard a sound which acutely roused her attention. It was that of the large hand-bell, such as the one Gerolamo used when making his round to collect the sick. Teresa stopped and turned her eyes to the spot from whence the sound proceeded, but as it came from a distance, as well as from the crowd intervening, she was unable to distinguish the bell-ringer. Presently a person approached quickly from the spot whence the sound came, who said to an acquaintance—

“The Virgin has already taken the city under her protection, I believe.”

“How so ?” asked the other.

“The Becca-morti have not a person in the cart, although they have been out for more than two hours.”

“The saints be praised,” was the reply. “But whither are you going so fast?”

“To get a good place in the Cathedral.”

“I expect you will have some difficulty; I hear it is already as full as it can hold.”

“No matter, I will try at any rate,” was the reply, and the person passed on.

The bell now rang again, but nearer than before, and the moment after Teresa perceived the banner Gerolamo carried rise above the crowd. She immediately advanced, and found the cart approaching, Gerolamo the while ringing his bell, and the crowd which surrounded it keeping at a respectful distance, not to come in contact with the Becca-morti. As soon as Teresa recognised Gerolamo, without any hesitation she walked up to him and said—

“Oh! how I have longed to see you! Tell me how is my friend?”

“She continues alive, and that is all,” said Gerolamo. “But why did you leave home? Return to my mother’s immediately, and there you will find your father. Go at once,” he continued, impatiently. “Do you not see every one is looking at you, and it is prohibited for any one to speak to us. Go, or you will be arrested.”

Teresa, bewildered as she was, as well as overjoyed at the intelligence she had received, left Gerolamo, and had proceeded but a few paces when one of the Beccamorti quitted the cart, and advancing to an officer of the municipality, who was standing by, said to him—

“Seize that girl. She has disobeyed the orders of the Signori della Sanita.”

“How so?” inquired the officer, who looked at the man with an expression of extreme disgust on his countenance.

"She was yesterday in the Lazaretto. She came across in the ferry-boat with a friend who was plague-stricken, and a number of others in the same condition as well as several who had died of the disorder. It is against the law for her to set foot in the city. I denounce her, and claim the reward. My name is Carlo Pedretti. I have a right to the reward, and will have it."

"I do not believe you," said the officer, still unwilling to arrest the girl.

"I tell you it is true," said Pedretti, "and all the other Becca-morti know it. And if you don't believe me, ask Dr. Boschi himself. I understand you. You want the reward for yourself."

The officer now perceived that the affair was serious. Still he appeared to hesitate, when an old woman advanced and said—

"And I denounce her as a heretic. She not only just now refused to cross

herself when the crucifix passed in the procession, but she would not kneel to the relic of the blessed St. Agatha when everybody else did. All saw she would not kneel, and you can ask any one you please. But, remember, I claim the reward. You let her go, if you dare, and I will complain to the Holy Office. Listen, neighbours," she continued, addressing those near her; "he will not arrest a heretic when she is pointed out to him."

A considerable crowd had now collected, attracted by the denunciations made by Carlo Pedretti and the old woman against Teresa, and the excitement continuing to increase, the officer, evidently against his will, arrested Teresa, and conducted her into the receiving room at the Palace of Justice, where accusations against prisoners were first heard. Here they found the substitute of the syndaco, who on seeing a young girl of such respectable appear-

ance brought before him, inquired, with much surprise on his countenance, of what offence she was accused.

“She is accused of two offences,” was the man’s reply. “The first for having disobeyed the orders of the Signori della Sanita in entering the city after having yesterday visited the Lazaretto, and being in communication with the plague-stricken, and also on a charge of heresy.”

The substitute on hearing the latter charge merely contemptuously shrugged his shoulders, and then giving a kindly glance at Teresa, inquired who it was that had made the absurd charge of heresy against so young a girl.

“An old woman, who is now outside.”

“Why did you pay any attention to her?” said the substitute.

“She had collected a crowd round her, many of whom seemed to side with her, and to prevent a disturbance I thought

it best to bring the young girl before you."

After a moment's hesitation the syndaco's substitute said, "Call in the old woman, and let us hear what she has to say."

The old woman was now brought into the room, followed by several of her companions, whom the officer in vain attempted to keep out.

"What is your accusation against the young girl?" asked the substitute.

"That of heresy," replied the old woman. "She refused to cross herself when the crucifix passed in the procession, or kneel before the relic of the blessed St. Agatha."

"Did you tell her to do it?" asked the substitute.

"No, I did not," said the woman. "That was no affair of mine."

"Then," continued the substitute, at the same time glancing kindly at Teresa,

as if to give her a hint what answer to make, "how do you know that she saw the crucifix and the relic?"

The old woman replied that the girl could see as well as she could.

"I am by no means certain of that," said the substitute, looking impressively at Teresa, as if to claim her particular attention to his words. "You surely did not willingly show any disrespect to the crucifix and the blessed relic?"

Teresa remained silent.

"Speak, girl," the substitute continued, somewhat impatiently. "If you did not see the relic, say so, and I will not entertain the accusation."

"But I claim my reward," said the woman.

"Once more," continued the substitute to Teresa, and this time almost imploringly, and without paying any attention to the old woman, "can you not answer my question, and say that you did not see the

relic and the crucifix, or you would not have shown them any disrespect?"

Teresa still continued silent.

"I have no choice," said the substitute, shrugging his shoulders with a look of sorrow. "I must enter the charge of heresy against you. And now for breaking the sanitary laws. Who is it makes this accusation against her?"

"One of the Becca-morti, named Carlo Pedretti," said the officer who had arrested Teresa; "and he claims the reward offered by the municipality for the detection of offenders. He also says that Dr. Boschi is aware of the fact."

"She must also be detained on that charge," said the substitute. "Place her in a cell by herself so that she may not communicate the plague to others if she has it. In the meantime we must inform the Holy Office of her arrest." Then turning to Teresa, he continued, "What is your name, my girl, and where do you reside?"

In a moment the idea flashed across Teresa's mind how much mischief might occur if she answered the question. At the same time being unwilling to state a falsehood, she replied—

“Pray do not ask me the question, for I cannot tell you.”

“But I must have an answer,” said the substitute.

“I dare not tell you,” said Teresa, beginning to weep.

“Listen, my poor girl,” said the substitute, in a kind tone of voice, “the question must be answered, if not to me to the syndaco, who, fortunately for you, is not at present in the building.”

“I cannot tell you my name,” said Teresa.

“Had he been here,” continued the substitute, without noticing Teresa's remark, “he would not only have insisted on your answer, but probably would have put you to the torture to obtain it. Now listen to


me," he said, slowly and impressively. "Can you not tell me your name and address? Of course it does not matter to me who you are and where you live, as I personally should take no trouble to make further inquiries about you. So you see it will be better for you to give me your name and tell me where you live now, or you will have to do so when suffering from the torture cord. Now take my advice, and tell me your name and address."

"I cannot," said Teresa, after a moment's hesitation. "It is impossible."

"You must have your own way then," said the good-natured substitute. "I am sorry for it, and I have no help. Take her away, and see that she has no communication with any of the other prisoners."

CHAPTER XII.

THE ESCAPE.

E must now leave Teresa in her solitary cell in the prison of the Palazzio della Ragione, and return to her father and Bernardino Ochino, in the house of the boat-builder at Ponte-Lagoscuro. The reader will remember that at the time we left them, a portion of the scattered Protestants of the district were about to collect together in secrecy and alarm, in consequence of the report which had reached them of the persecutions having broken out in Ferrara, which they rightly feared might in a short time extend to themselves. Altogether their meeting presented a singular and not un-

picturesque scene. The bright calm beams of a clear full Italian moon lighted up the scenery of the river, while on a carpenter's bench at a part of the workshop farthest from the river was placed a lamp, which shed its light over an Italian translation of the Holy Scriptures belonging to Frederigo, and which now lay open for Ochino's use. The venerable man was kneeling before it, and his small congregation having devoutly placed themselves on their knees around him, reverently and earnestly followed in the prayer he was offering up, that God would take the few children of the scattered flock there assembled under His protection, and give them help and consolation, besides courage and endurance to support the persecutions with which they were threatened.

When they rose from their knees he read a portion of the Scriptures, both from the Old and New Testament, appropriate to the occasion, and then commenced to

address them on the difficult position in which they and the scattered Protestant Church in the whole territory, were at that moment plunged. He touched eloquently and forcibly on the spiritual despotism exercised by the Church of Rome, in not permitting the faithful to believe anything but that which was approved by the Pope, who, like the rest of mankind, was at the best but a fallible mortal. He insisted that confessions and absolutions which followed them, pardons and indulgences, together with prayers to the saints, and the fire of purgatory, were but inventions devised by the Papacy for the enthrallment of men's minds and consciences contrary to the word of God. He pointed out to them how Daniel had already prophesied the coming of the Pope, saying that he shall induce men wickedly and naughtily to break their promises which they had made to God. He begged them to set at nought the claims of the Pope, that God was

angry with man, and that Christ could not sufficiently pacify his wrath, and that he (the Pope) must stand forward as our advocate, thus as Daniel had prophesied, transposing the time of grace into the time of the law, and that of light into darkness.

“Better, my brethren,” he said, “endure all the persecutions than admit so grievous a blasphemy. I beg you to pray earnestly for courage to support the oppression which threatens you, and should, to your eyes, no immediate or favourable answer be received, remain convinced that it is only withheld for some good or wise purpose, and as true soldiers of the cross, submit to the fate which may be in store for you with the same courage and resignation, which as soldiers you would show on the field of battle.”

The most profound attention was paid by the congregation to Ochino's discourse, and when he had concluded they one and

all thanked him warmly for the consolation and encouragement he had given them. For more than an hour afterwards he remained conversing with them, and then Frederigo suggested the propriety of their dispersing one by one, so as to avoid attracting the notice of their neighbours. His advice was taken, and the little meeting gradually scattered, each member of it on leaving respectfully kissing the pastor's hand, and bidding him farewell with many expressions of affection and respect.

When the friends in the boat-house were left by themselves, they began to talk seriously over the best plan to be adopted for Ochino's escape. Frederigo suggested that they should cross the river and continue their road northward till they arrived at the canal which led to Commacchio. They could there call at the house of a Protestant friend, and should they find him within, they could remain with him and determine what further steps to take.

If, on the contrary, his friend should be from home, they could either continue their road by land to Venice, or go by the canal to Commacchio. This plan was then decided on, as offering more advantages than any other they could suggest. Should they be followed they would have a better opportunity of eluding their pursuers, as the canal diverged almost at right angles to the road to Venice, and with a little care they might be able to leave it unknown which road they had taken, and this uncertainty, combined with the danger which would attend any one openly seizing a fugitive in the Venetian territory without the consent of the Republic, would give Ochino an almost positive certainty of making his escape.

Ochino now put on his cowl and wallet, and prepared himself for the journey, it being considered prudent that he should start immediately. They then all took leave of Frederigo, who remained in the

boat-house, and entering the boat proceeded to the other side of the river, Giacomo taking care to keep as much as possible in the light traced by the moon-beams on the water, so as to avoid being seen from the shore. In a short time afterwards they reached the Venetian side of the river, when Giacomo and the Judge took a lengthened leave of Ochino, at which both shed tears, each seeming to be under the impression that it was the last time they should meet in their earthly pilgrimage. Their sad parting over, Ochino, accompanied by Paulo, who was to act as his guide on the journey, was put on shore, and the Judge Rosetti proposed to Giacomo to return to Ferrara with all speed, as he was in a state of intense anxiety respecting the fate of his daughter. With all Giacomo's exertions, however, his pace was but tardy, nor did there appear any probability of his reaching Ferrara before the middle of the next day, when fortu-

nately they saw by the shore a light tow-boat to which the horses were at that moment being attached. Giacomo, who was acquainted with almost every boatman on the river, immediately rowed his boat in that direction, and finding he knew the man in charge of it, requested as a favour that he would allow him to affix his boat to the stern of the other. This was willingly accorded, and the Judge also promised the man with the horses a considerable reward if he was able to reach Ferrara at an early hour the next morning.

The offer was willingly accepted, and the boats started off together at a far more rapid rate than before, and early the next morning Giacomo reached his house, there being fortunately no persons in sight at the time. Giacomo was now able to conceal the Judge in a small outhouse without being observed, where it was proposed he should remain during the day, the former promising that in case he were not arrested

himself, he would, while at work in the ferry, make every inquiry in his power as to what had taken place in Ferrara since they had been absent, and then in the evening, when others had retired to rest, they could determine what their future movements should be.

Nor did Giacomo fail to keep his promise. He worked the ferry during the whole of the day, giving evasive answers to his wife and son when they inquired what journey he had been on. Being a remarkably shrewd, clear-headed man, he soon discovered from conversation he had with the different passengers he ferried over, that persecutions or movements against the Protestants had hardly yet extended beyond the walls, although considerable activity had been shown in arresting all persons suspected of heresy within the city. He also learnt to what an extent the plague had reached, and the danger there was of its spreading. The intelligence he had

received respecting the Duchess and her attendants merely confirmed that which they had already heard—namely, that the Duchess was imprisoned in the Castle, and many of her attendants had been incarcerated, and that liberal rewards had been offered for the apprehension of the others. Of the movements of the Holy Office he could gain but little intelligence, their operations generally being conducted with much secrecy. Still, he heard the report that several of those arrested were likely to be placed on their trial, and if found guilty and afterwards remained obstinate, it was reported that they would be executed or severely punished as examples to others. Of Teresa and Madonna Ponte he could hear nothing. Nor was this surprising, as, of all the attendants on the Duchess, they were perhaps the two least known.

After Giacomo had related to the Judge in the evening, in the small outhouse in

which he was concealed, the somewhat unsatisfactory information he had been able to collect during the day, the latter asked him what steps he thought he had better take, for the state of anxiety he was in respecting his daughter now became most intolerable.

“Take my advice, *Excellenza*,” said Giacomo, “and remain patiently concealed as you are for another day. I will endeavour to-morrow to get into the city, and possibly I may there gain more information. At any rate, no good can be obtained by your risking your own safety. On the contrary, it is more than probable if you are detected you might be accused of assisting at the escape of the Pastor Ochino, and the relationship between yourself and your daughter might cause a suspicion that she also was implicated in it.”

The Judge could not deny the truth of Giacomo’s reasoning, and he consented to

remain where he was till another day had passed over.

Although Giacomo succeeded in entering the city, he was unable to collect any more intelligence beyond what he had heard the day before. He, however, implored the Judge to remain patiently in his place of concealment, promising he would again make another attempt. He kept his word, but no success attended his inquiries. The next morning, to his great surprise, on bringing over his second cargo of passengers, he saw a man, who proved to be no other than Gerolamo, beckoning him to approach. Giacomo hesitated for a moment, not liking to be in too close a vicinity of a man in such an official dress, but recognising Gerolamo, with whom, as before stated, he was acquainted, he advanced to within about a yard of him, and then asked what he wanted.

"I wish you would oblige me," said Gerolamo, "by making inquiries among

your passengers if they have heard anything of the Judge Rosetti."

"Why?" inquired Giacomo, now greatly interested in the matter.

"Because his daughter wishes to see him, and as I know you are a Protestant—I don't say it with any offence—I thought possibly among your gossips you might have heard something of him."

"Suppose I had," said Giacomo, cautiously, "how do I know that you may not wish to betray him?"

"Look here, Giacomo, you're an honest man, and so am I, though you may not think so. I tell you that not only has his daughter escaped, but she is concealed in my mother's house, and she is most anxious about the fate of her father. You can come with me, if you please, and ascertain if what I tell you is correct."

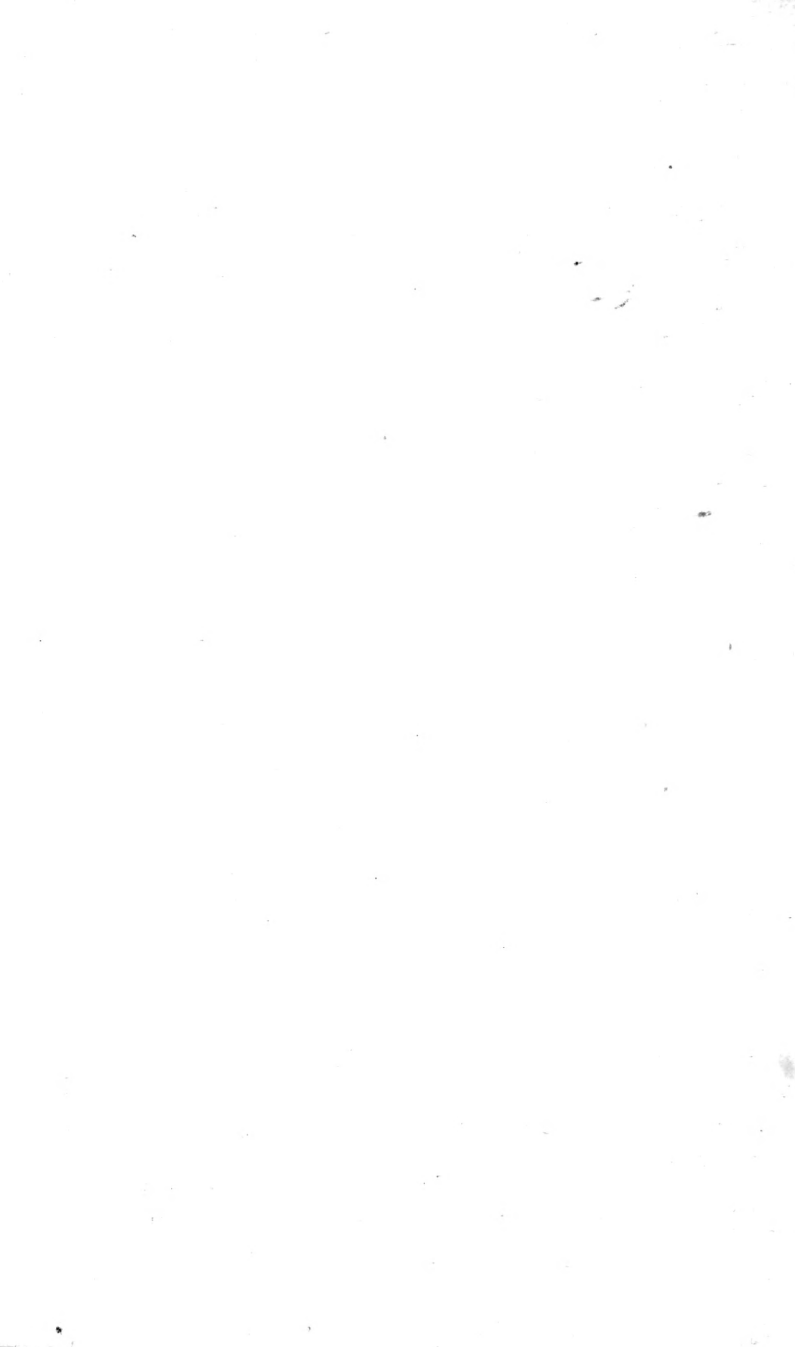
If Giacomo had any doubts of the honesty of Gerolamo, on account of his having become a Catholic, he had none for his

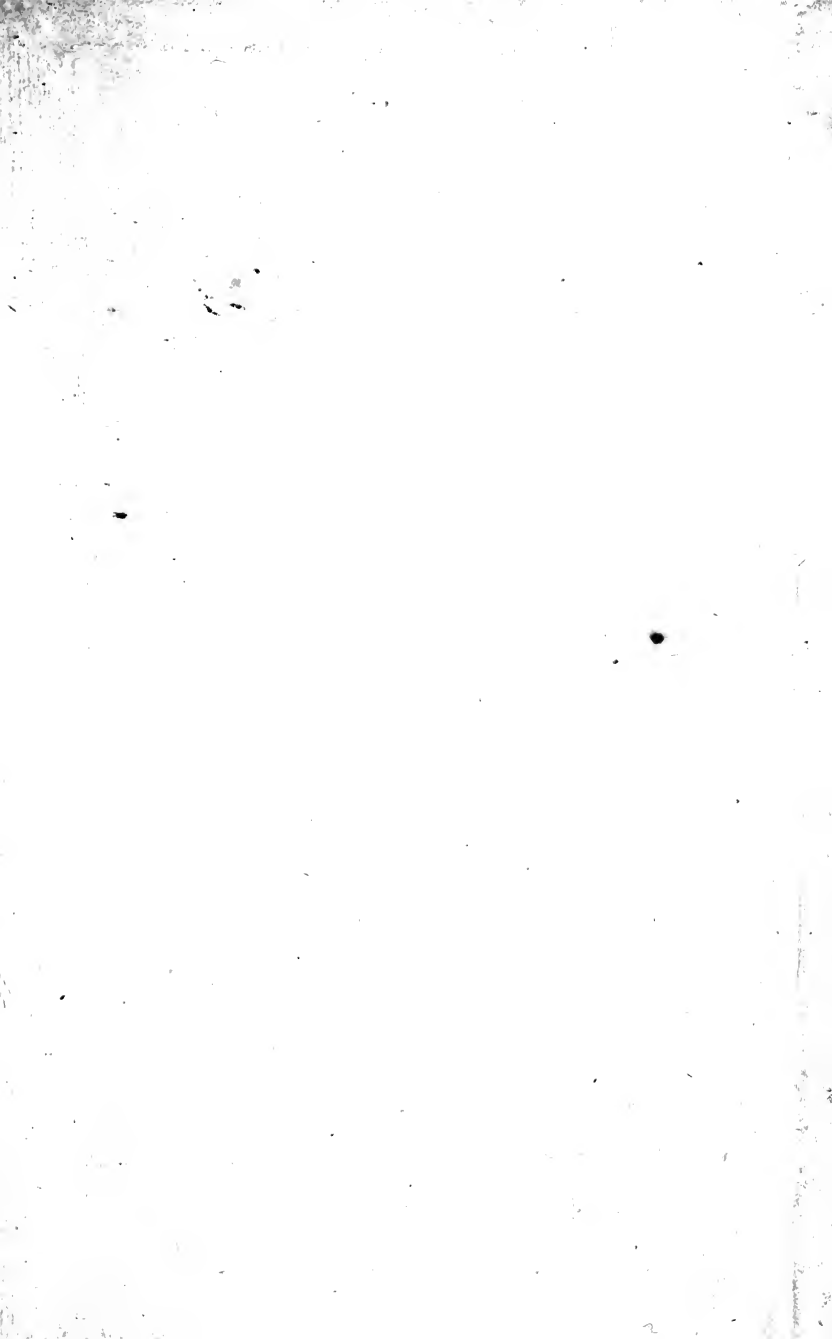
mother, and the result was that without further delay he returned to the other side of the river, and informed the Judge what he had heard. Rosetti, risking the danger of being detected, immediately crossed over in the ferry. Giacomo, putting him on shore a short distance from the usual landing place, and then pointing out Gerolamo to him, and telling him to follow him, he returned with his boat to the ferry to continue his usual avocations.

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